

ULTIMATE

MARVEL

2023

Ultimate Invasion 1-4
Ultimate Universe

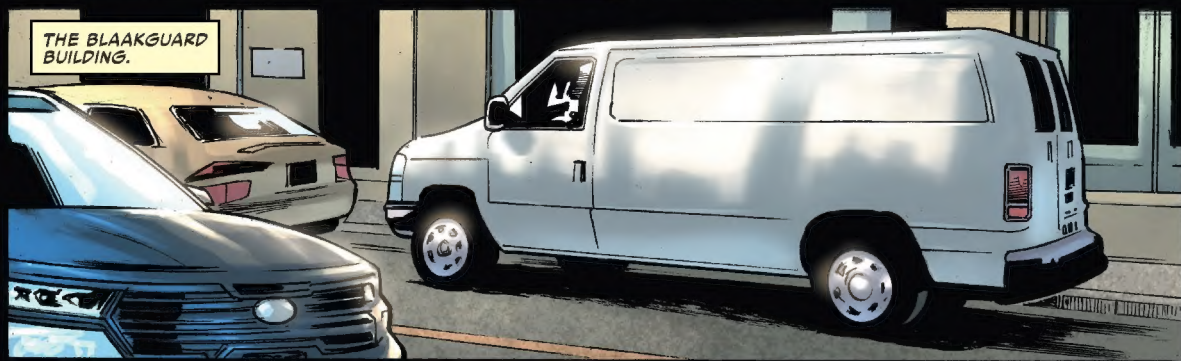


IRON MAN 23
BY BRIAN KENT
IRON MAN 23
BY BRIAN KENT



616

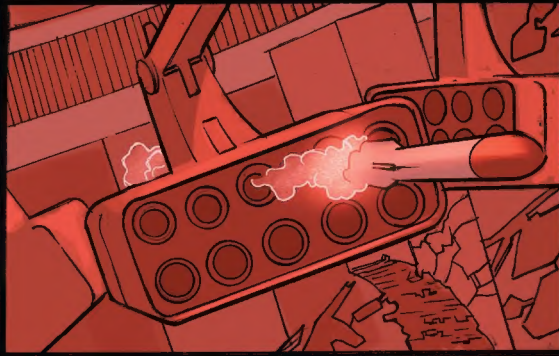
**CHAPTER ONE:
“GOOD ARTISTS COPY”**











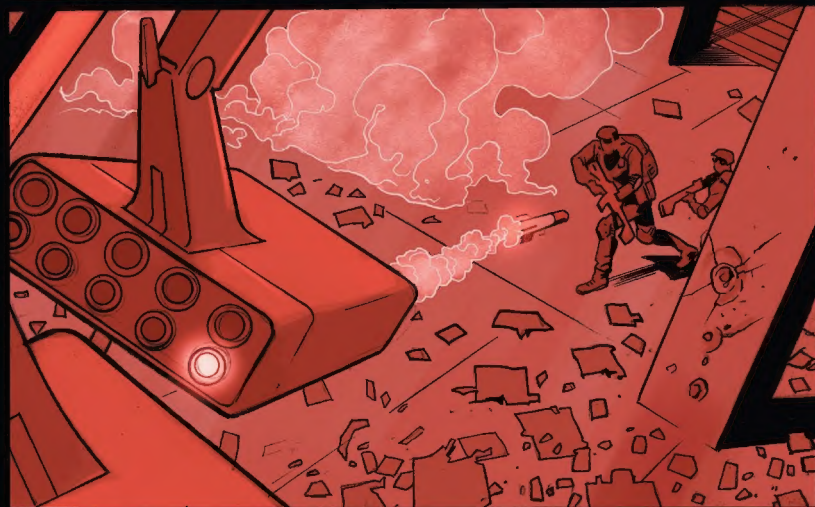
... FELT THAT ONE.

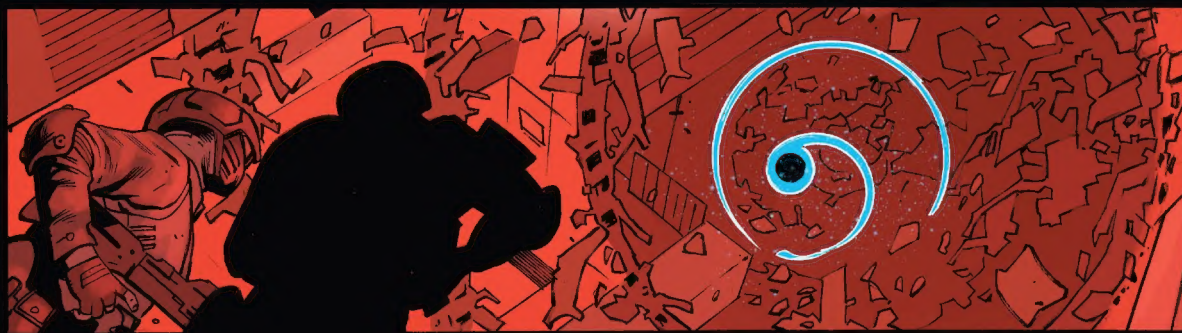
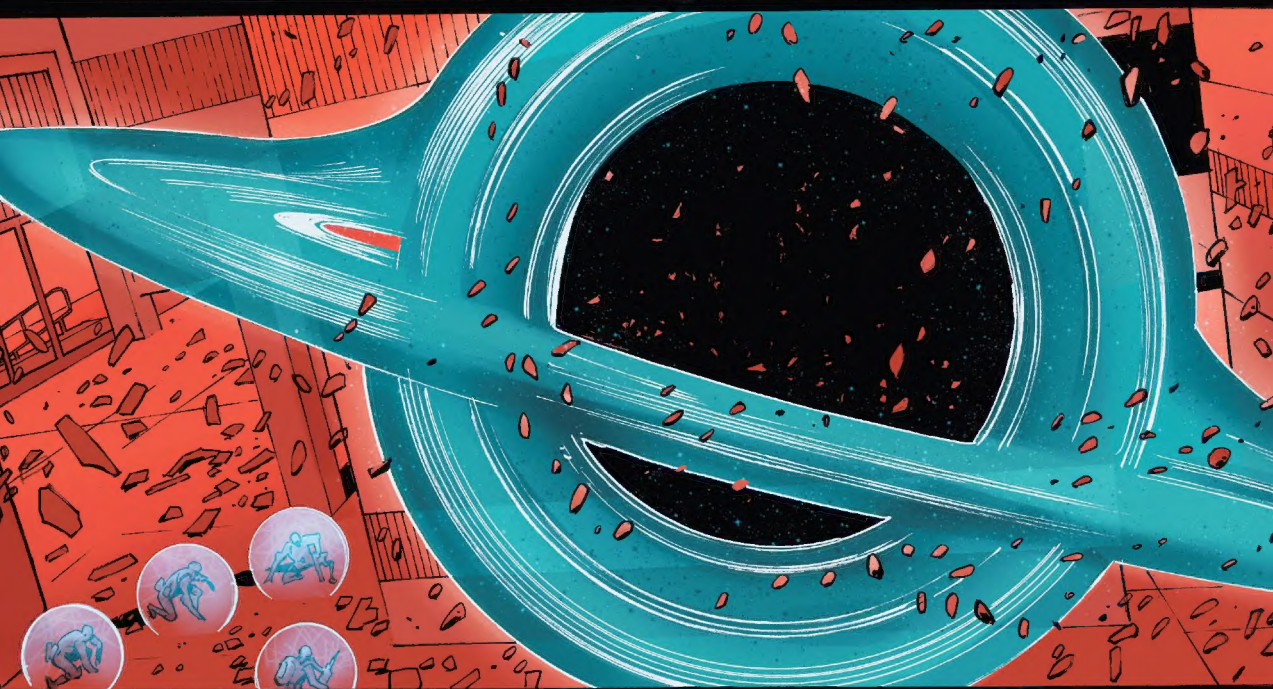
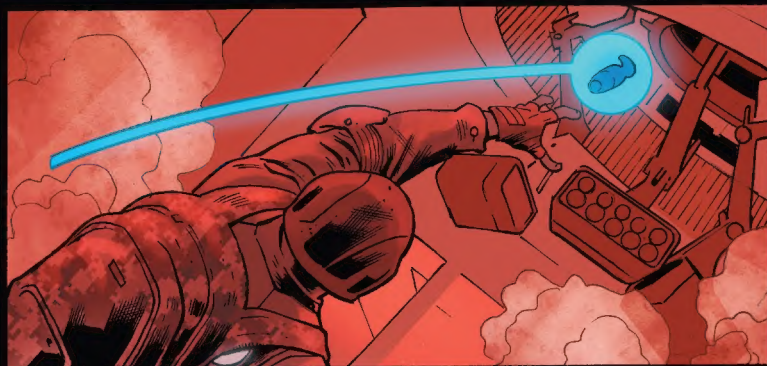


WE'VE GOT TO TAKE THAT THING OUT.

TELL YOU WHAT, YOU FIND THE MANAGER AND LODGE A COMPLAINT...

...AND I'LL TRY SOMETHING A LITTLE MORE DIRECT.







OOOF.

EXCUSE ME.



ARE YOU THE MANAGER?

I'M NOT THE MANAGER.

YEAH, BUT YOU DO HAVE A KEY, DON'T YOU? I'LL TAKE THAT NOW.



GOT THE FIRST ONE!

YOU TOO.



WHAT...WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?

WHAT DO YOU WANT?



A BILLION DOLLARS.



THIS... THIS ISN'T A BANK.



WE KNOW.



DID I HEAR YOU SAY A BILLION DOLLARS?

YES.

GO IN THREE, TWO, ONE...



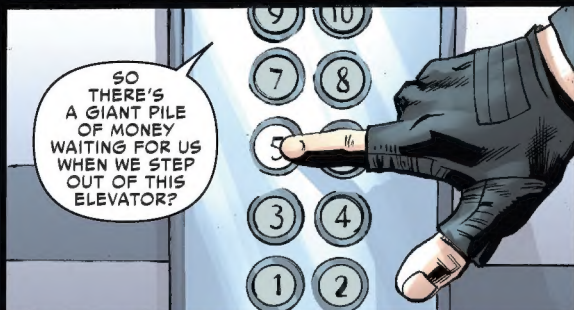
OKAY. SO SHOULDN'T MY SHARE BE A QUARTER OF THAT?

DID YOU FIND THE JOB? PLAN THE JOB? DID YOU DO ANYTHING AT ALL BEFORE YESTERDAY?

NO.

THEN JUST TAKE YOUR TEN-MILLION-DOLLAR CUT, SAY THANK YOU, AND BE DONE WITH IT.

ALL CLEAR.



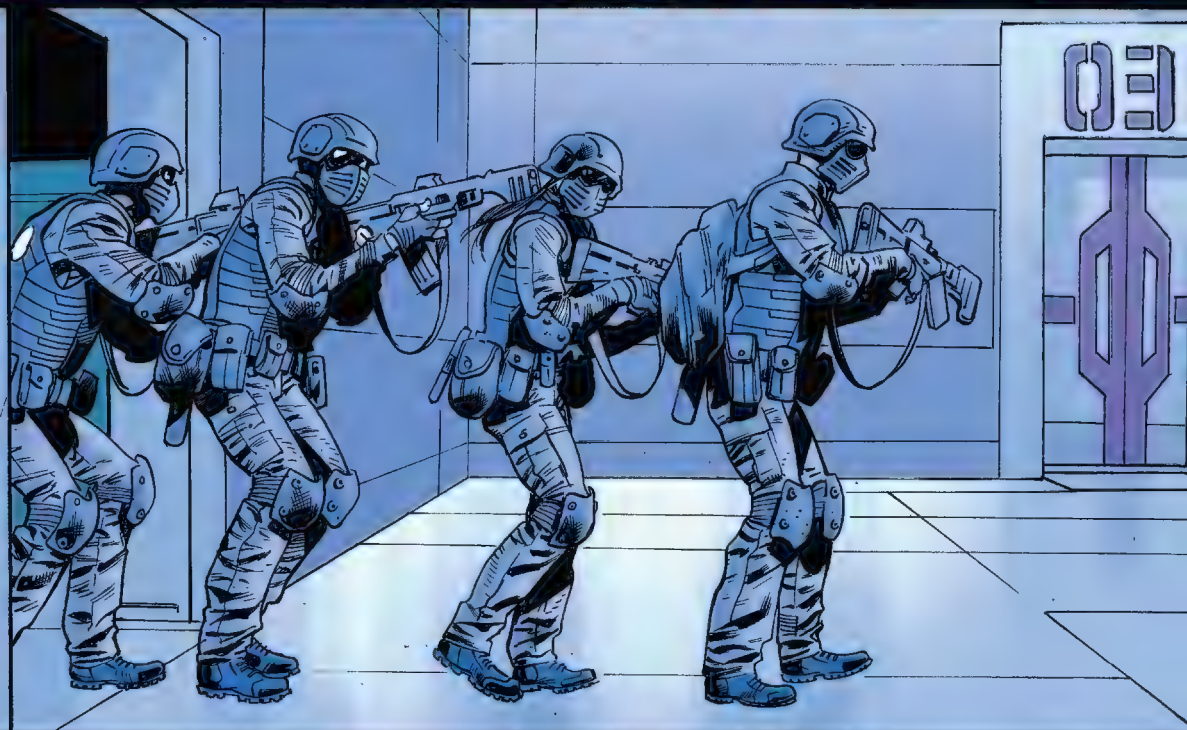
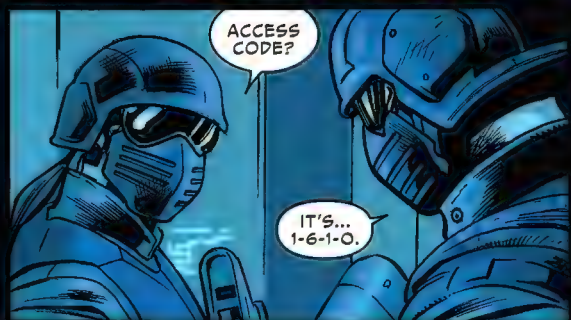
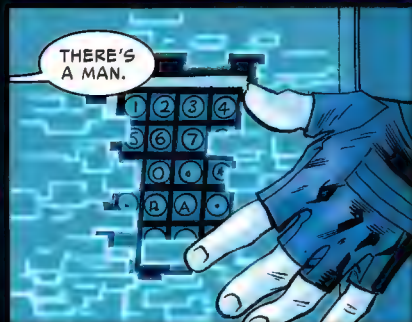
SO THERE'S A GIANT PILE OF MONEY WAITING FOR US WHEN WE STEP OUT OF THIS ELEVATOR?



NO.

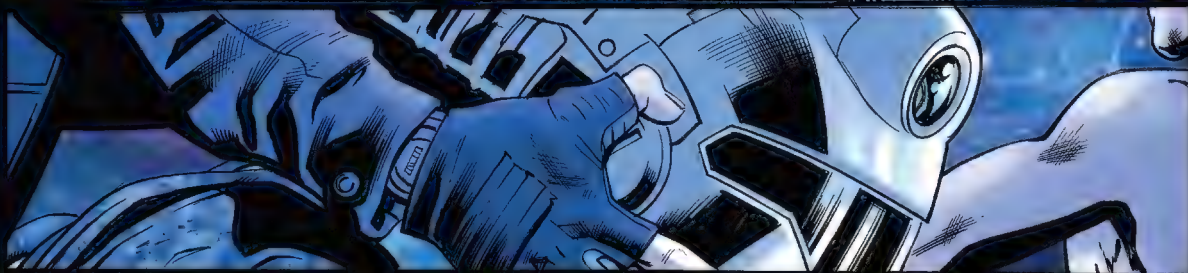
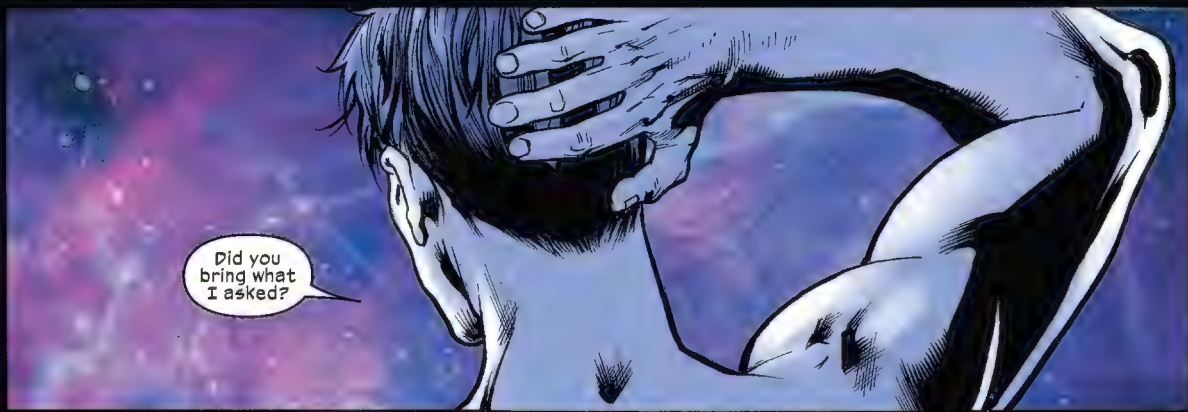


OKAY, BUT BEHIND THE DOOR...THERE'S A GIANT PILE OF MONEY?





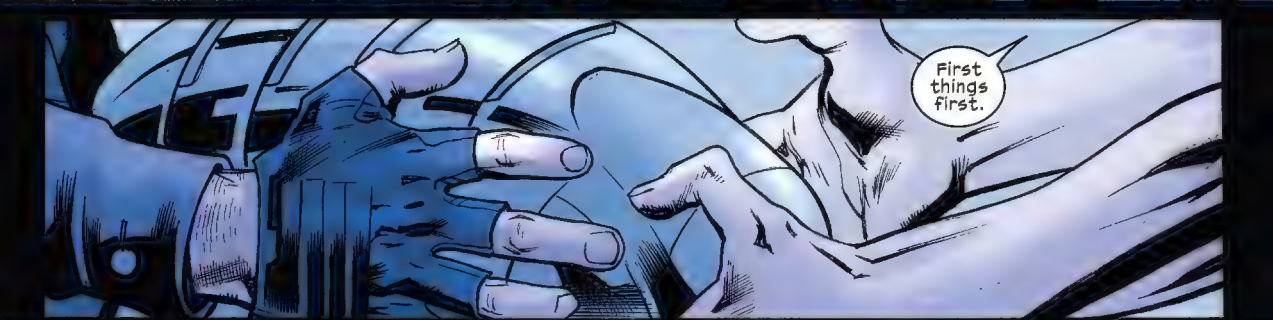
Right on
time.





HERE YOU GO, SIR.

WE BROUGHT A CHANGE OF CLOTHES TOO.



First things first.



AGREED.

WHERE'S OUR MONEY?

Where all money is...floating in the ether. Awaiting summons from an imaginary state to a more believable fiction.

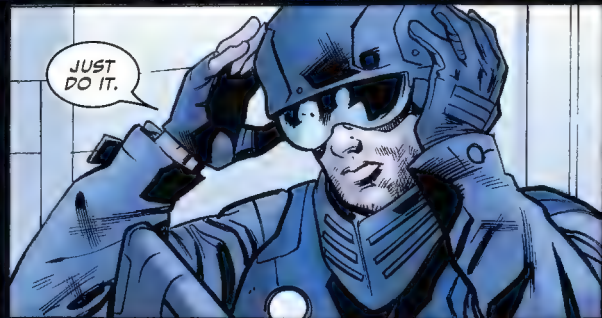
THAT SOUNDS LIKE YOU DON'T HAVE IT.

I promise you. Whatever "it" is...I most certainly do have it.



AM I REALLY SUPPOSED TO BELIEVE THIS GUY DID ALL THIS FROM INSIDE OF A PRISON...

...BUT HE COULDN'T GET HIMSELF OUT?





Dominic Green.
Mischa Slope.
Randall West.

But you
are Jackson
and not Keith
Conrad.

KEITH GOT
ITCHY AND SNUCK
OUT OF THE SAFE
HOUSE TWO DAYS AGO.
HE DIED IN A CAR WRECK
ABOUT AN HOUR AFTER
THAT. FREAK ACCIDENT.
WE HAD TO IMPROVISE.



Ah. The unforeseen
complications of impatience
and ennui. Trapped here, I'd
forgotten what *most people*
call discipline.

I, of course,
planned for overlap, but
the genetic sequencing was
for you four for a reason.
Each and every ingredient
is what makes for
good soup.

This will
present as
a less than one-
percent anomaly.
Most people would
miss it...



...but I
wouldn't. And
he certainly
won't.

Which vexes
me. To no end.
I suppose my choice
now is a subtle prayer
or a more "on brand"
message.



IT WAS LAST MINUTE.
THIS WAS THE BEST
I COULD DO.

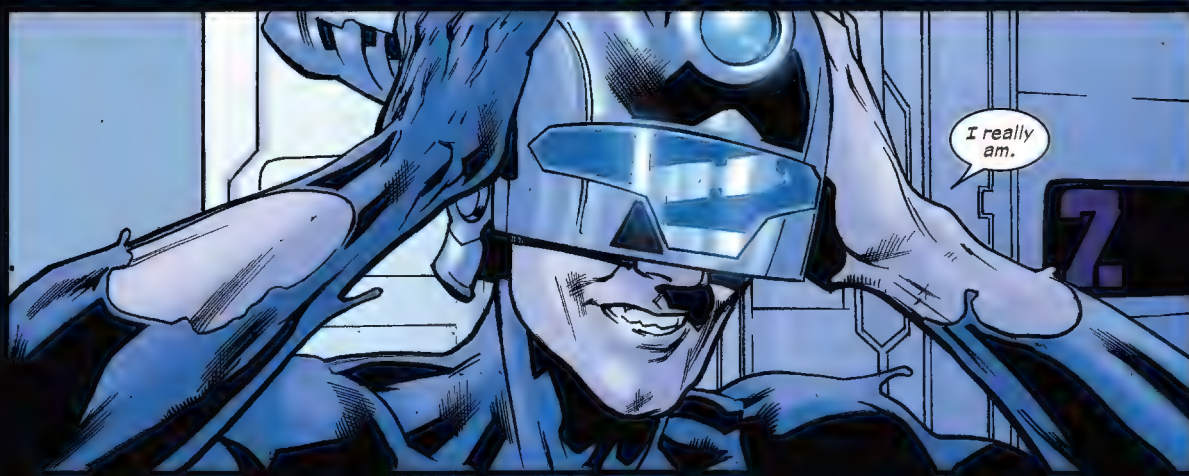
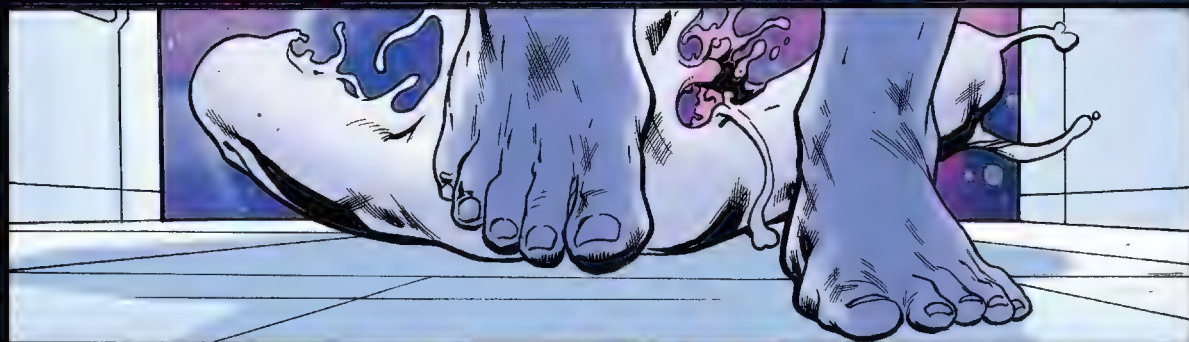
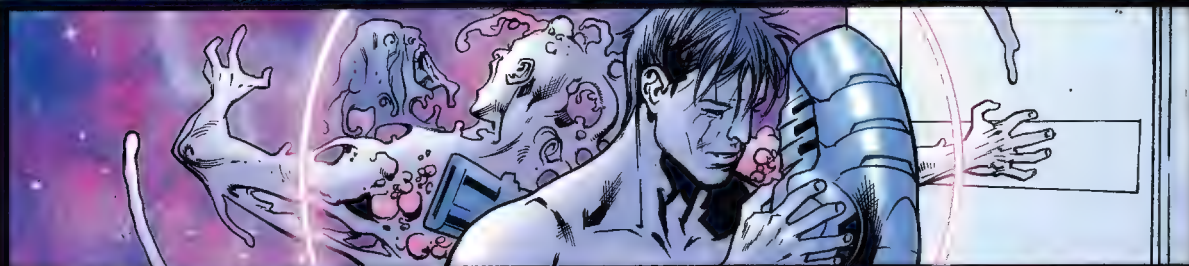
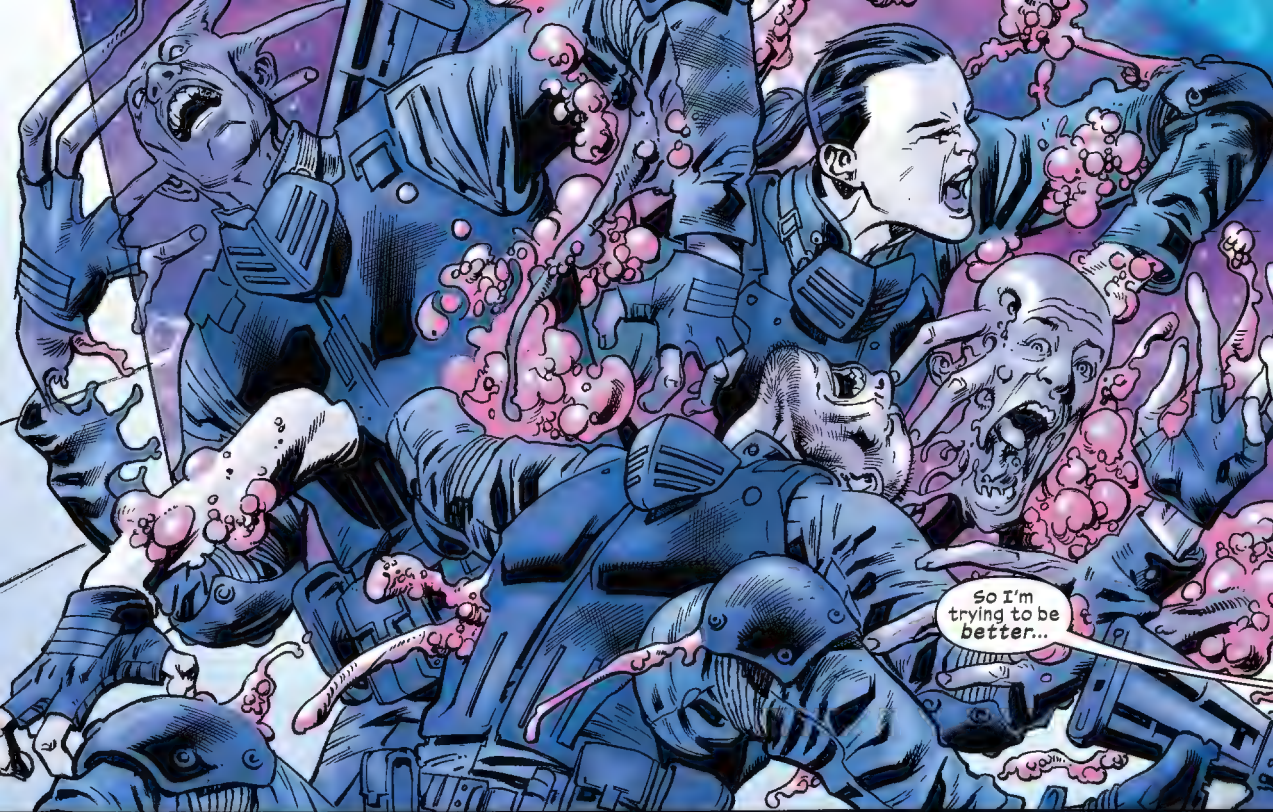
Your best?

There was one of
my therapists in here
who--before I did what
had to be done--did have a
surprising effect on me...



He
encouraged
and challenged me
in a way I did not
believe was
possible.

His ideas
of acceptable goals and
personal betterment were
predictably short-sighted,
but he actually did make me
want to be a better man--a
better man with better
goals.





MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS...

ULTIMATE INVASION

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SARA PICHELLI & MATTHEW WILSON**

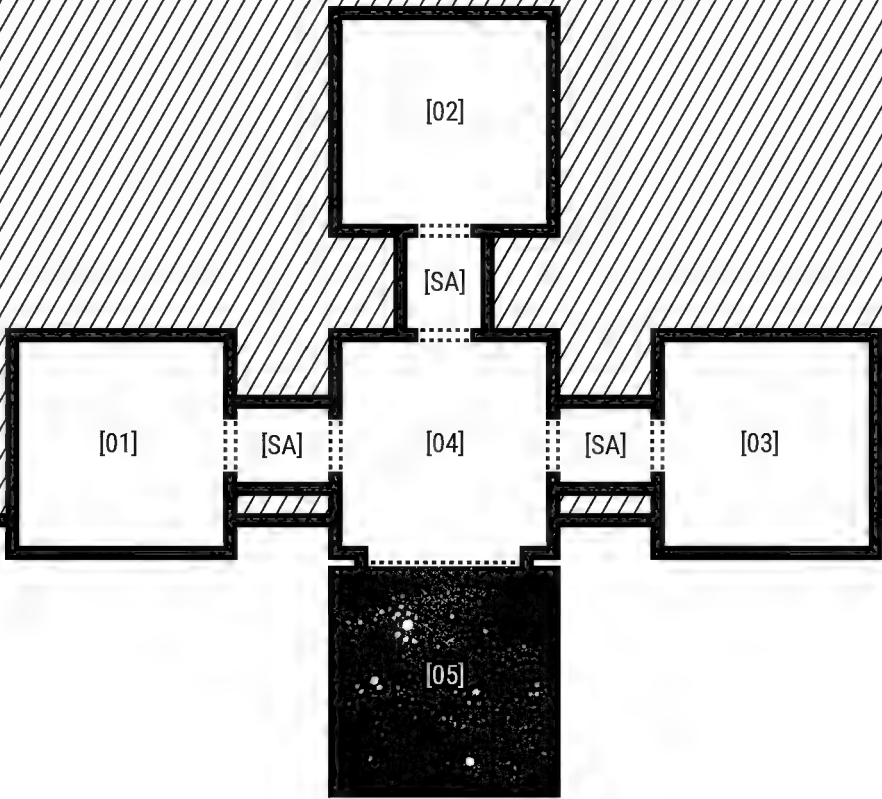
SPECIAL THANKS TO DONNY CATES

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DAMAGE CONTROL

REMOTE PRISON [PR_42] ****QUARANTINE****

PRISONER MANIFEST: 1610



- [SA].....SECURE ACCESS
- [01].....PROJECT PEGASUS.....[restricted]
- [02].....BLAAKGUARD.....[destroyed]
- [03].....FURY ACCESS.....[classified]
- [04].....PRISONER CELL [1610] ◆.....
- [05].....NEGATIVE ZONE

THE MAKER [1610] MULTIVERSAL REED RICHARDS [DIVERGENT]

DANGER:
Prisoner possesses universal-level intellect combined with megalomania and personal dissociative disorder. Level one restrictions are in place, and extreme caution is advised.

SIX WEEKS AGO.
THE BLAAKGUARD BUILDING.

ALL
AROUND US,
OUR CITIES ARE
CRUMBLING.

I KNOW
THAT MANY MIGHT
CONSIDER SOMETHING LIKE
THIS THE APOTHEOSIS OF
MODERNITY'S BLIGHT, BUT
I WOULD NOT COUNT
MYSELF AMONG THAT
NUMBER.

NOR YOU,
REED, SO
WHY ARE WE
LOOKING AT
RUBBLE?





"IT'S BEST WHEN BEGINNING THESE THINGS TO REMEMBER HOW MUCH HARDER IT IS TO BUILD A THING THAN DESTROY A THING."

WHEN I SAW THE FOOTAGE-- WATCHED THE EXPLOSION AND THE BUILDING GO DOWN-- I COULDN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT IT. LIKE MY MIND WAS TRYING TO SOLVE A PUZZLE THAT DIDN'T PRESENT AS ONE. SO I TRIED TO TAKE A CLOSER LOOK--BUT WASN'T ALLOWED TO.

AH.



AND THEN--LIKE MANNA FROM HEAVEN--MY GOOD FRIEND WITH YEARS OF GOVERNMENT INFLUENCE AND CONNECTIONS CAME FOR A VISIT. AND I JUST HAD TO SHOW HIM THE SIGHTS.

YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW THICK THE RED TAPE IS ON THIS ONE.

FROM WHICH WE CAN INFER THAT SOMETHING WAS HIDDEN HERE... AND NO ONE WANTS TO TALK ABOUT IT.



ONE QUESTION: WHY ARE WE BOTH PRETENDING THAT YOU COULDN'T FIND A WAY TO TAKE A LOOK IF YOU WANTED TO?

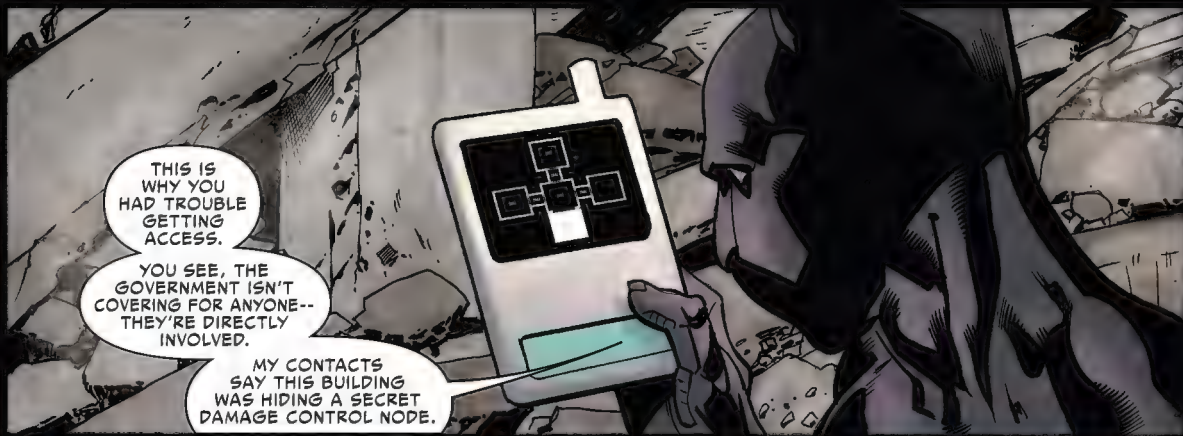
I WAS RECENTLY IN SOMETHING OF A RULE-FOLLOWING PHASE, T'CHALLA. I AM TRYING TO SHOW SOME RESTRAINT.



HOW'S THAT WORKING OUT FOR YOU?



NOT WELL.



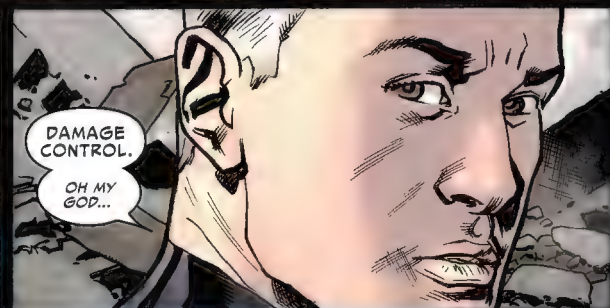
THIS IS WHY YOU HAD TROUBLE GETTING ACCESS.

YOU SEE, THE GOVERNMENT ISN'T COVERING FOR ANYONE-- THEY'RE DIRECTLY INVOLVED.

MY CONTACTS SAY THIS BUILDING WAS HIDING A SECRET DAMAGE CONTROL NODE.



DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT--OR WHO--THEY COULD HAVE HAD HIDDEN HERE?



DAMAGE CONTROL.

OH MY GOD...

LATER.

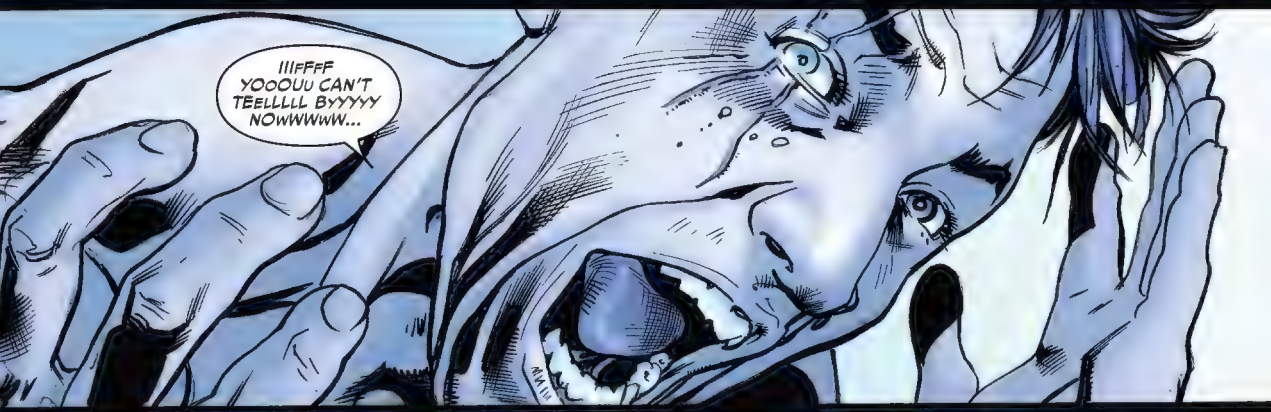


YOU CAN BREATHE NOW.

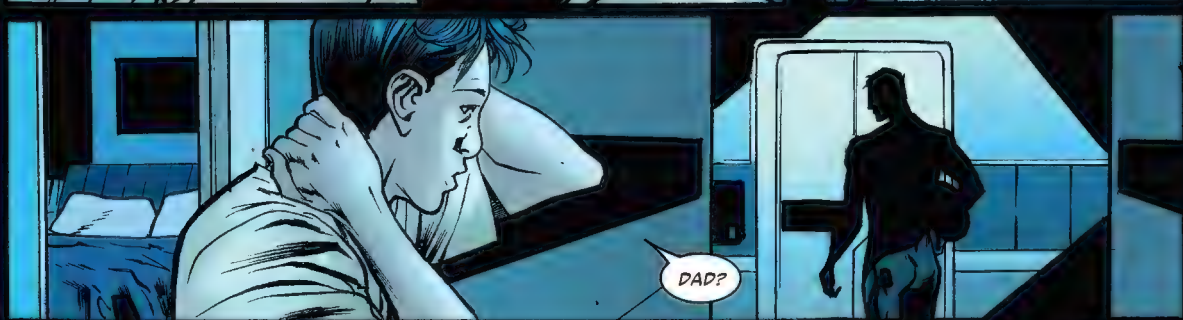
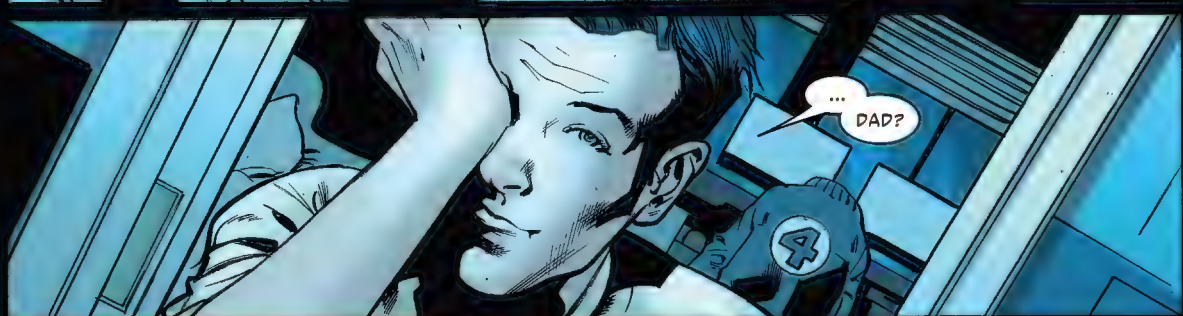
HE'S STILL HERE.

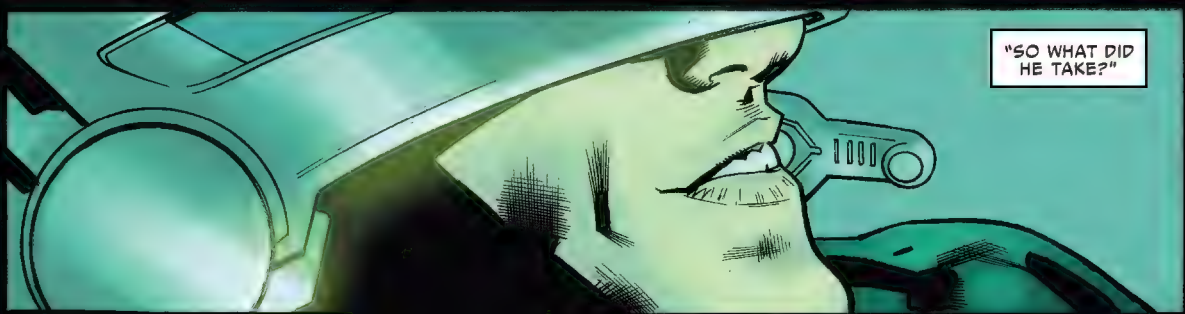
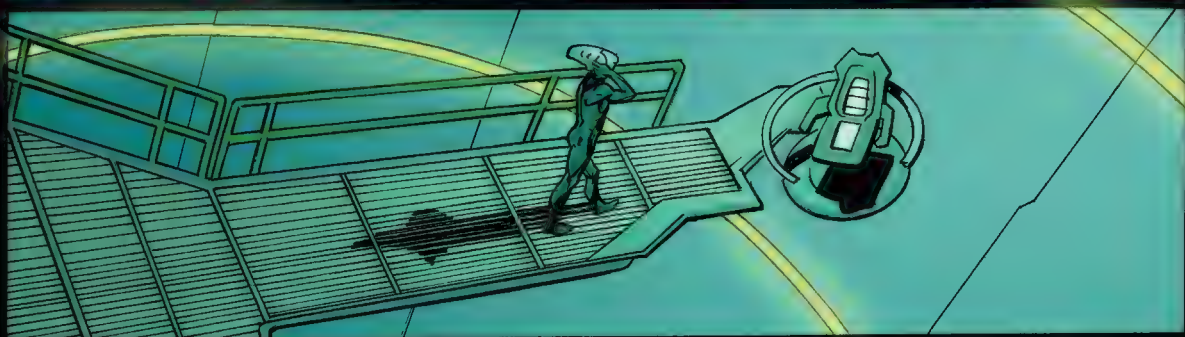
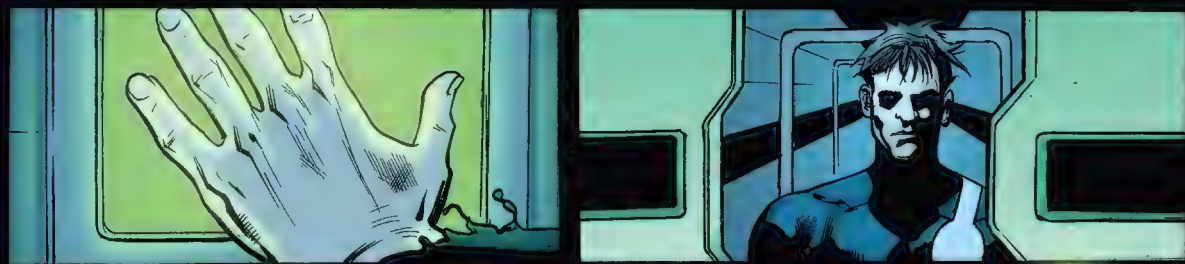
HMMM. PERHAPS...

IS THAT REALLY YOU, REED?
ARE YOU REALLY ME?



ONE WEEK LATER.
THE BAXTER BUILDING.





THE NEXT DAY.
THE NECROPOLIS.

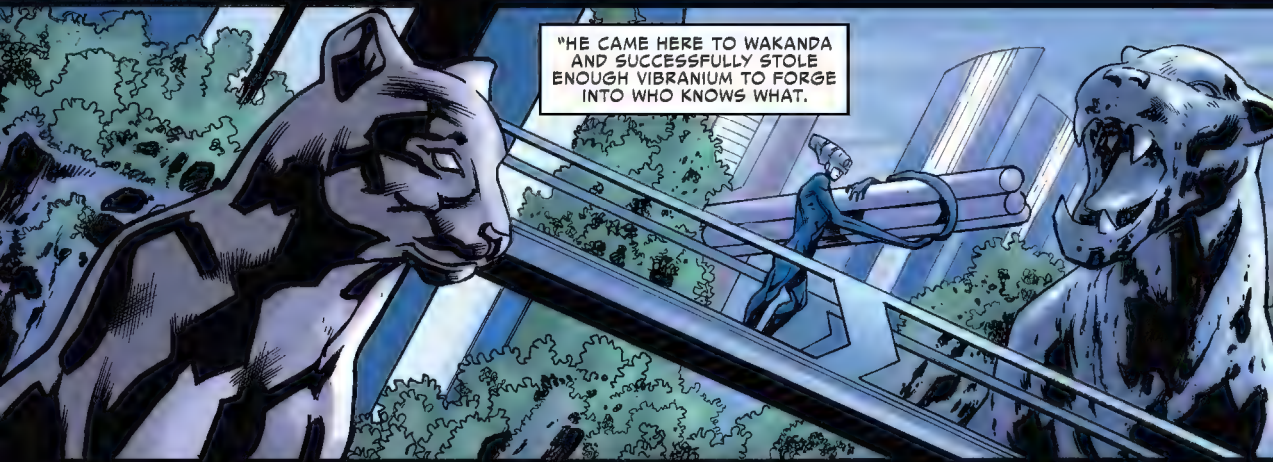


I'M
NOT SURE.
HE CLOSED THE
LOOP--COVERED
HIS TRACKS
WELL.

WHAT
WE DO KNOW
IS WHERE HE
WENT AFTER
THAT...



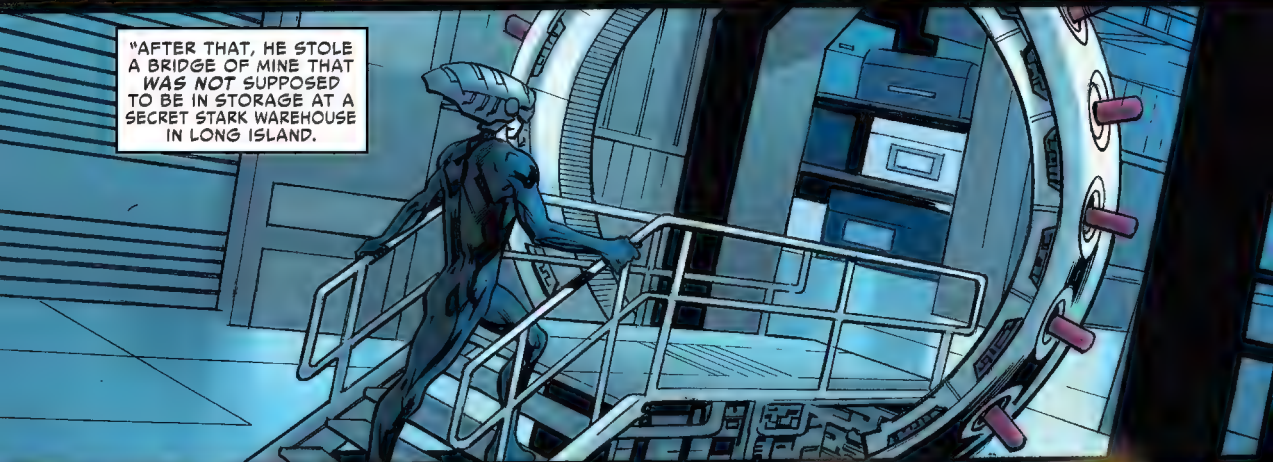
...DON'T
WE?



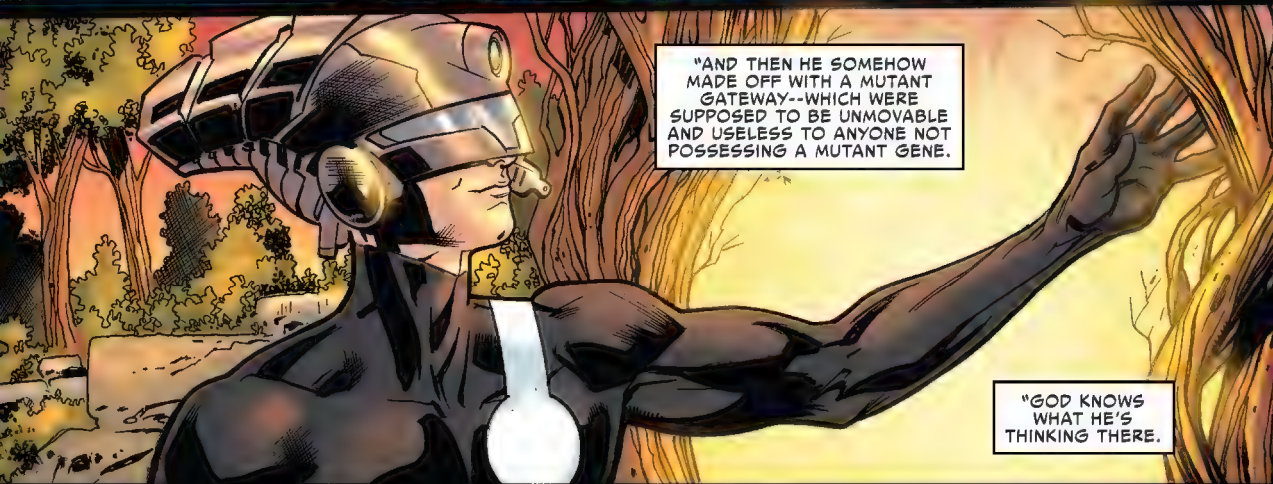
"HE CAME HERE TO WAKANDA
AND SUCCESSFULLY STOLE
ENOUGH VIBRANIUM TO FORGE
INTO WHO KNOWS WHAT.



"THEN HE APPEARED IN NEW
ARCTILAN AND MADE OFF WITH
FOUR INHUMAN TERRIGEN
SPHERES. EACH ONE WITH ENOUGH
ENERGY TO POWER A LARGE CITY.
FOR OVER A THOUSAND YEARS.

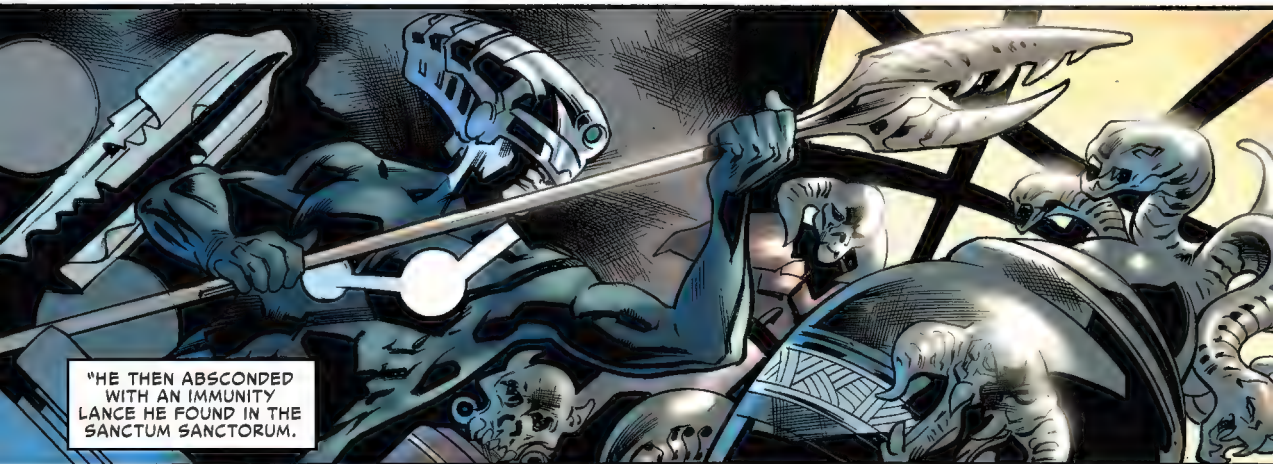


"AFTER THAT, HE STOLE
A BRIDGE OF MINE THAT
WAS NOT SUPPOSED
TO BE IN STORAGE AT A
SECRET STARK WAREHOUSE
IN LONG ISLAND.



"AND THEN HE SOMEHOW
MADE OFF WITH A MUTANT
GATEWAY--WHICH WERE
SUPPOSED TO BE UNMOVABLE
AND USELESS TO ANYONE NOT
POSSESSING A MUTANT GENE.

"GOD KNOWS
WHAT HE'S
THINKING THERE.



"HE THEN ABDSCENDED
WITH AN IMMUNITY
LANCE HE FOUND IN THE
SANCTUM SANCTORUM.



"AND FINALLY, IN THE RUINS
OF ATLANTIS, HE SECURED ONE
OF THEIR FEW FUNCTIONING
DILUTION SHIELDS. APPARENTLY,
AT NO SMALL COST.

"THE 'WHY' OF WHY
WE ARE GATHERED HERE
TODAY IS THE LINGERING
QUESTION: WHAT IS THE
MAKER MAKING?"



GIVEN ENOUGH TIME,
I'M SURE WE COULD MAKE
SOME ASSUMPTIONS OF WHAT
HE'S BUILDING BASED ON
THE RESOURCES
GATHERED...

BUT THE TWO
GATEWAYS, BOTH
THE SPEAR AND THE
SHIELD... WHY THE
REDUNDANCIES?

IT'S A MESSAGE. TO THE
INEVITABLE GATHERING OF
THE GROUP OF US. SOME
KIND OF UNMISTAKABLE
GRAND GESTURE... TALKING
SLOWLY FOR THE
CHILDREN...

HE
WANTS
US TO
KNOW.



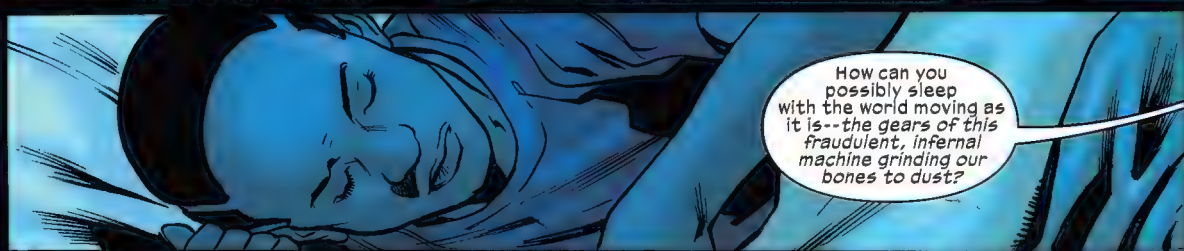
YES. AND THE COMPONENTS
HE STOLE ARE UNIQUE AND
IDENTIFIABLE. HE HAS TO KNOW
THAT WE'LL BE LOOKING FOR THOSE
ENERGY SIGNATURES... AND HE HAS
TO KNOW THAT WE'LL KNOW
WHEN HE TURNS IT ON.

SO WHAT'S
HE WAITING
FOR?

LATER THAT SAME DAY.
BROOKLYN.



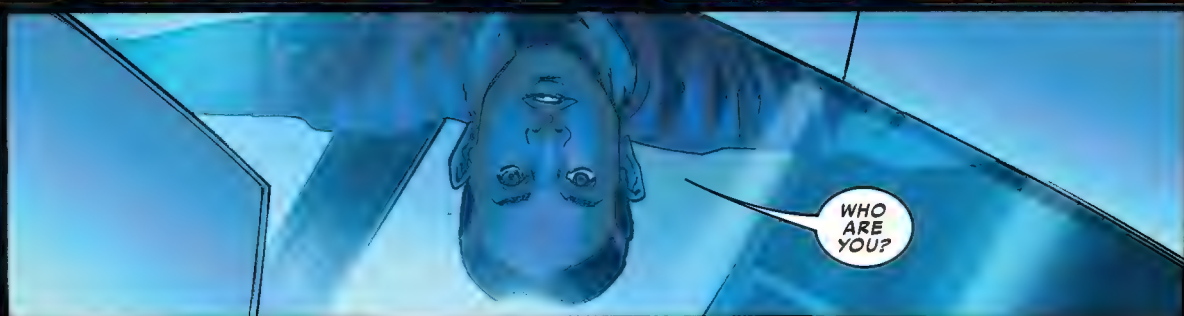
How can you
possibly sleep
with the world moving as
it is-- the gears of this
fraudulent, infernal
machine grinding our
bones to dust?



WHAT
THE--?!



WHO
ARE
YOU?





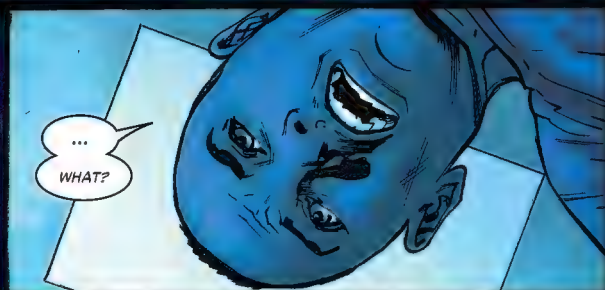
Have we
not met? I
cannot tell
with so many
of you...

The masks
and monikers
and--more than that--
the repetitive nature
of so many of
you...heroes.

WHO
THE HELL
ARE YOU?



You are
Miles Morales,
and I...
...am your
brother.



...
WHAT?



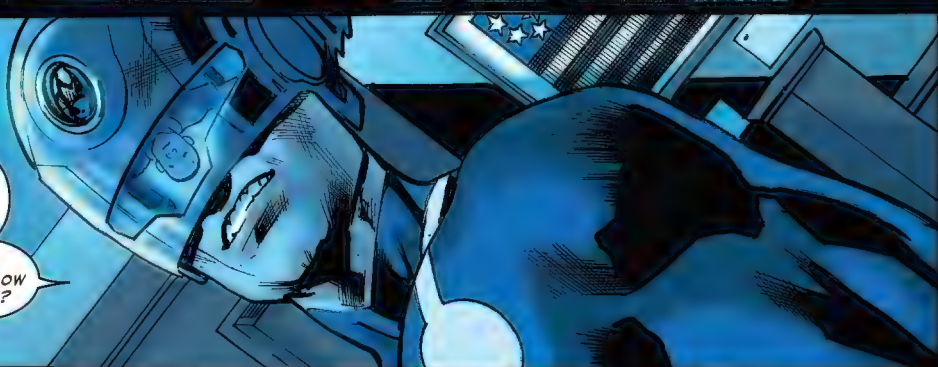
I read about
it in *his* records. It was
some trick of universal
rebirth and reality-shaping,
as I understand it... But
according to the secret
history...

...it's something
every creature
on this planet--in
this universe--
shares.

But you and I
have something
that sets us apart
from them. Apart
from their shared
history.

We are the only
two survivors of a
dead universe, Miles.
The only living children
of gods erased from
history.

Did
you know
that?





DID YOU NOT?



No, not in the way I do now. But if you know, then you must feel the same itch that I do. The one you cannot reach, the one you cannot scratch...

The pull of nothingness and oblivion that we share with the world we are from--the feeling of lives erased and forgotten.

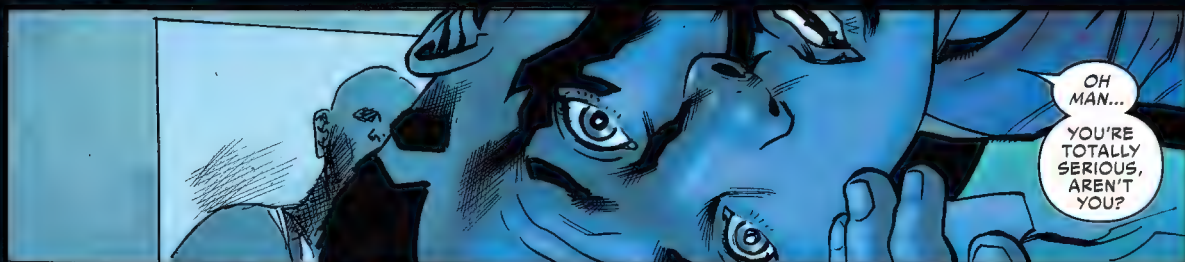
...
WHY ARE YOU HERE?



I am going... home.



Would you like to come with me?



OH MAN...
YOU'RE TOTALLY SERIOUS, AREN'T YOU?



Yes. It felt wrong to go and not ask you to come along.

I would want to be asked, if the roles were reversed.





WE'RE
GOING TO
STOP
YOU!

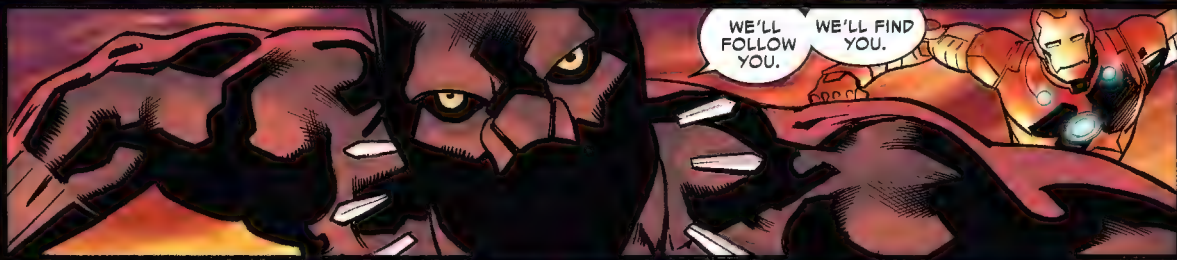


Now, Reed.
Why would you lie
to yourself like
that?

How can
you stop me when
you know neither
where I'm going nor
what I'm going
to do?

And I
promise you, by
the time you do
figure it out, I will
have already left
you long
behind.

My path,
you see,
is set.
My course
fixed.



WE'LL
FOLLOW
YOU.

WE'LL FIND
YOU.



The Bridge controller is set to
purge and randomize as soon
as I travel through.

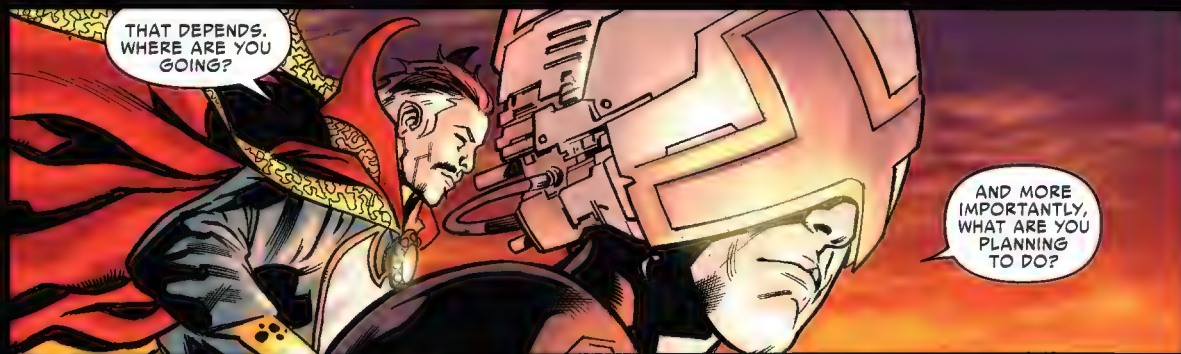
You might be able
to find where I went if
I didn't run the sequencing
through the gateway. But I
did...and as we both know, that
kind of biological encoding is the
best encryption under this,
or any other, sun.



IT CAN BE DONE.
ANYTHING CAN
BE DONE.

Yes, but
the time it would
take. It's measured
in years, decades
even...

Do you
really want to
find me that
badly?



THAT DEPENDS.
WHERE ARE YOU
GOING?

AND MORE
IMPORTANTLY,
WHAT ARE YOU
PLANNING
TO DO?



I'm going
someplace
I can call my
own.

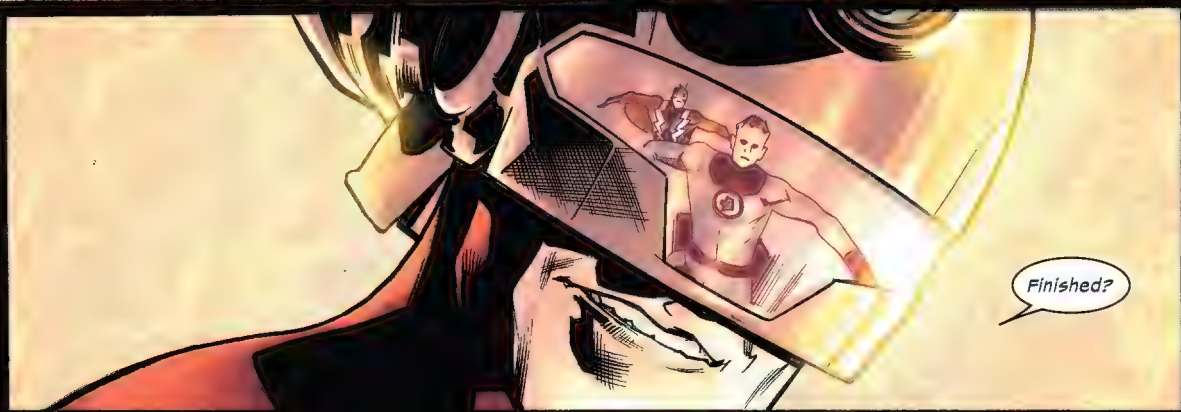
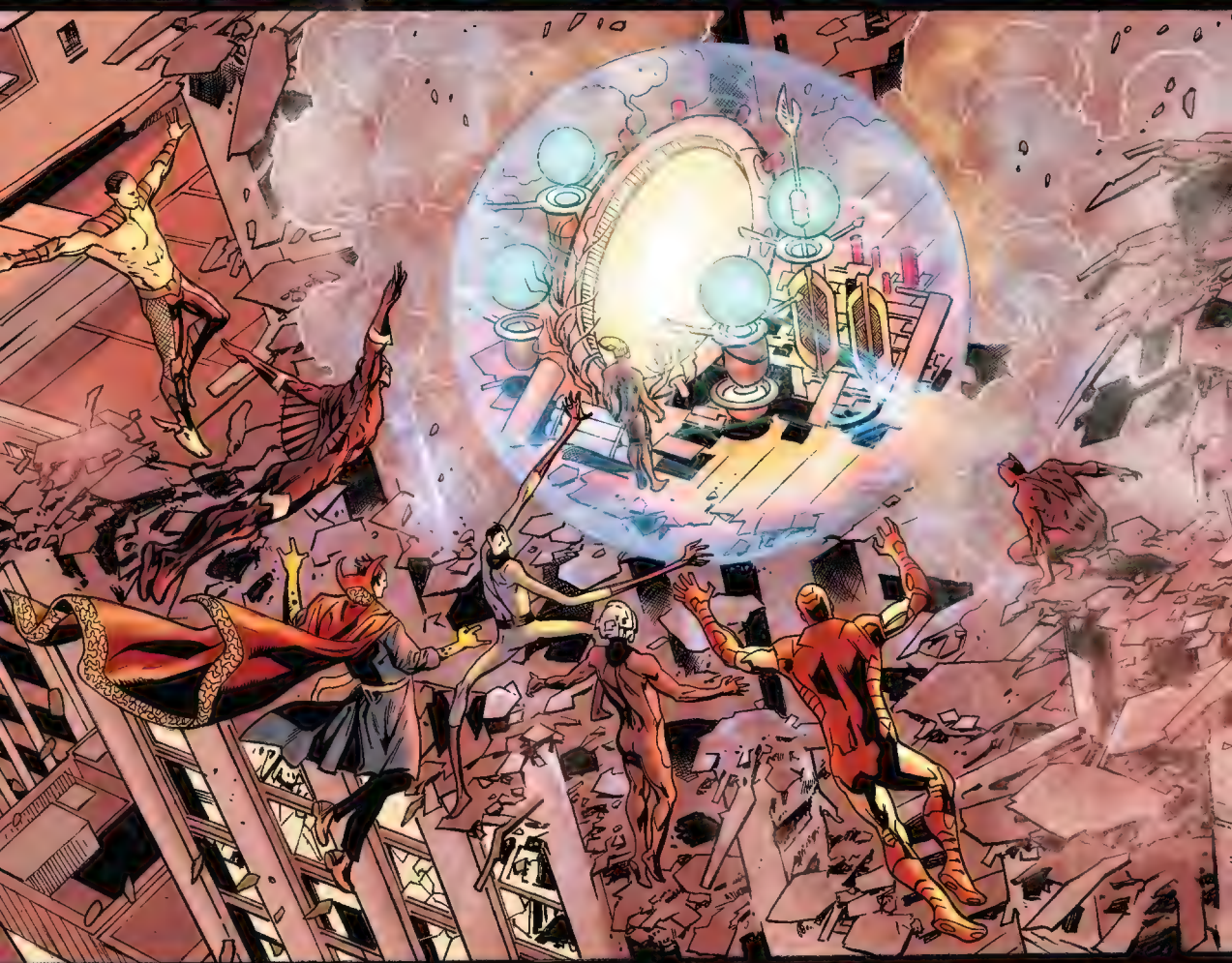
Someplace
I can create
as was intended
at my
creation.

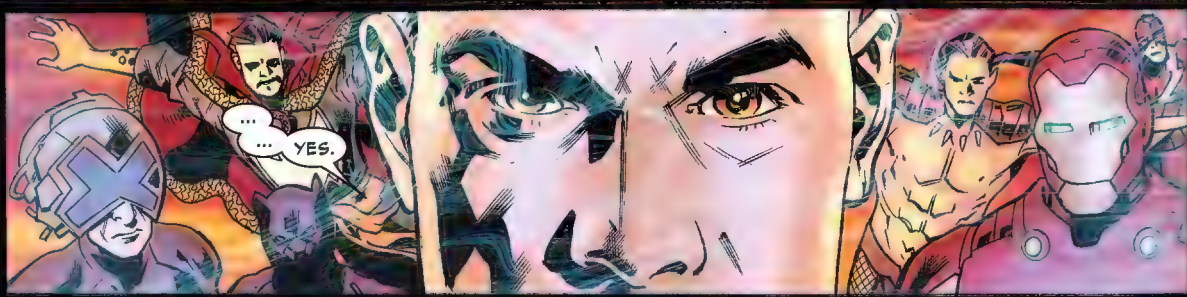
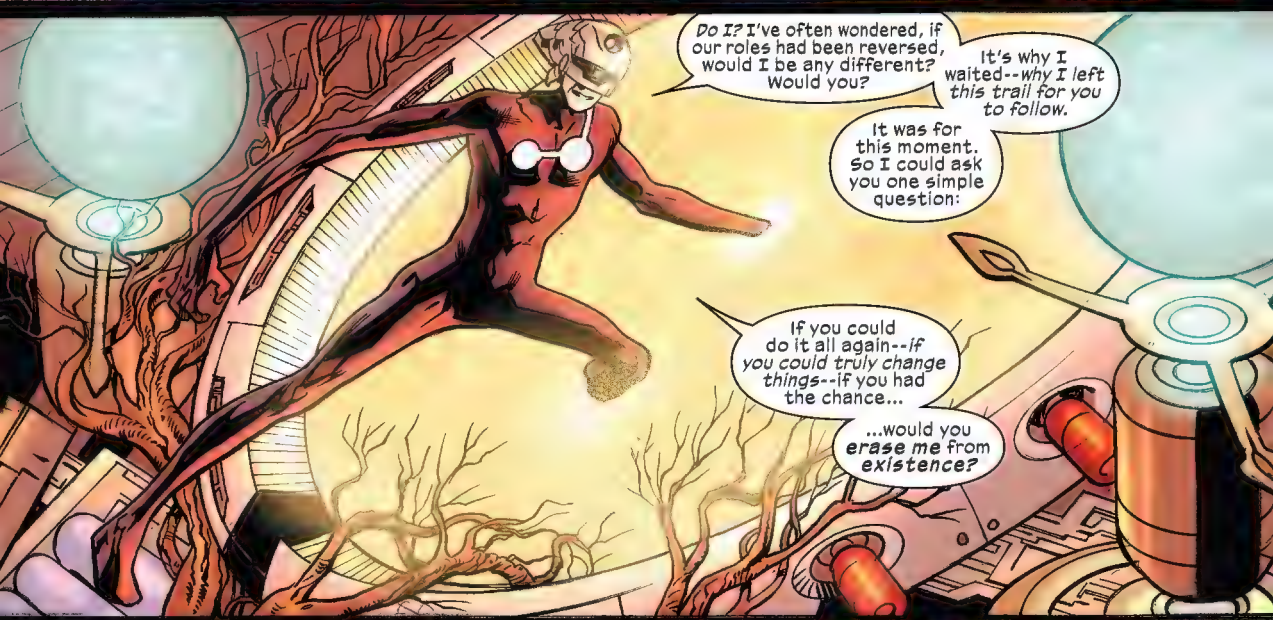
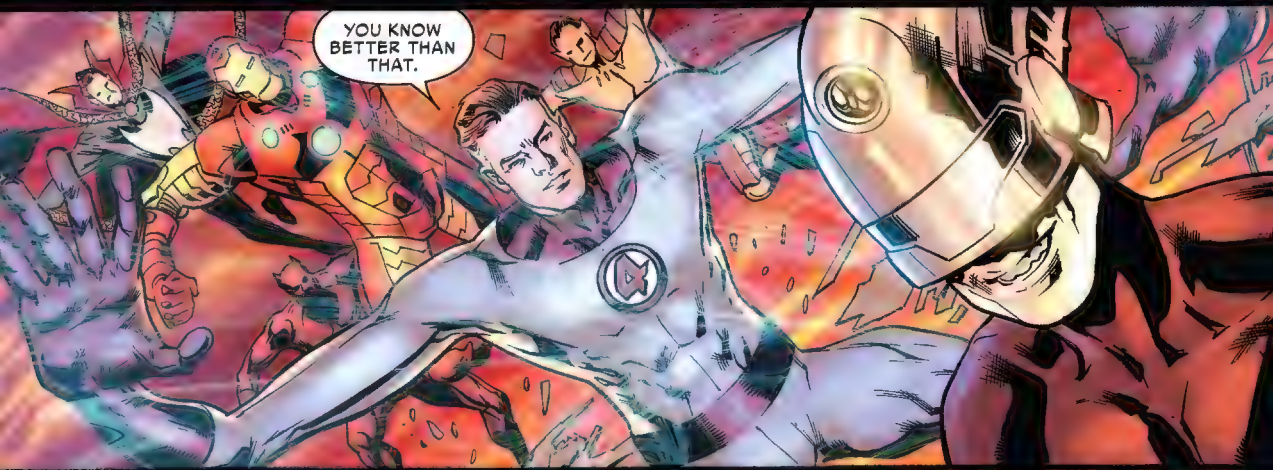


OH GOD...I KNOW
WHAT HE'S GOING TO
DO. WE HAVE TO STOP
HIM WHILE WE
STILL CAN.

DO IT!
DO IT
NOW!













**EPILOGUE:
“GREAT ARTISTS STEAL”**

Now.
But also then.



You're late, Peter Parker.
What a surprise.



I know, Liz, I know. Something came up. Something always comes up.

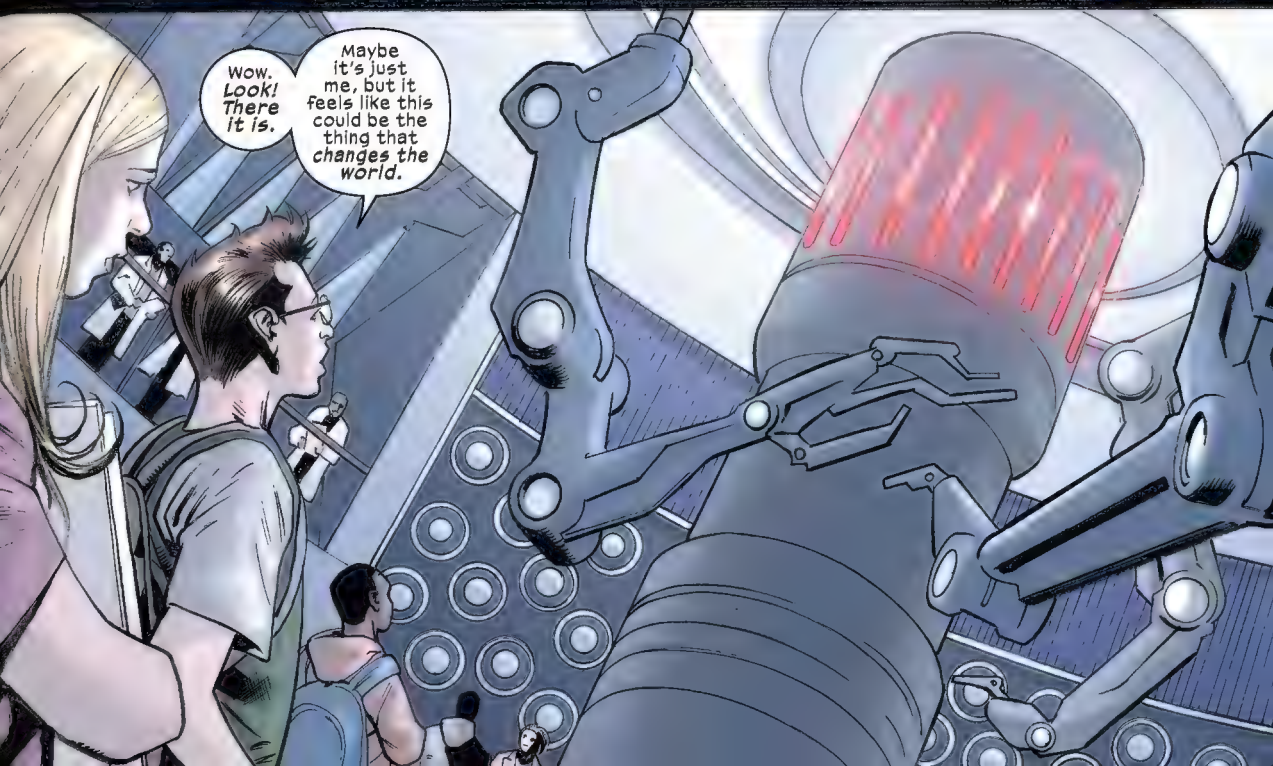
Whatever, you're here now...this better be good.



So where do you want to--?

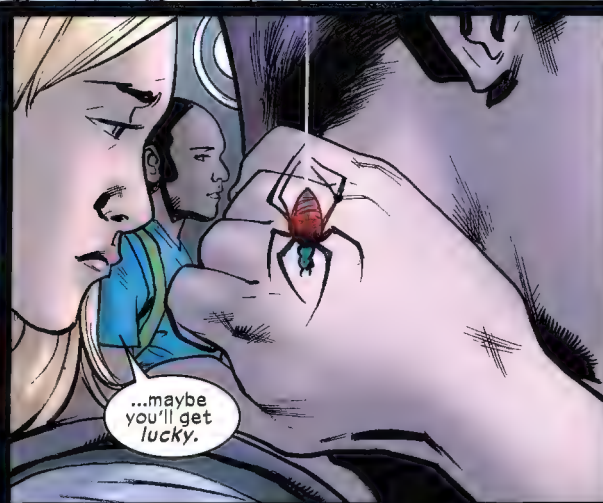
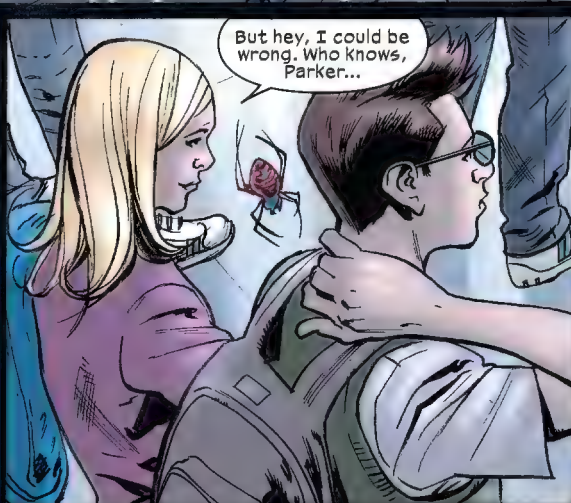
We should go that way. The east wing.

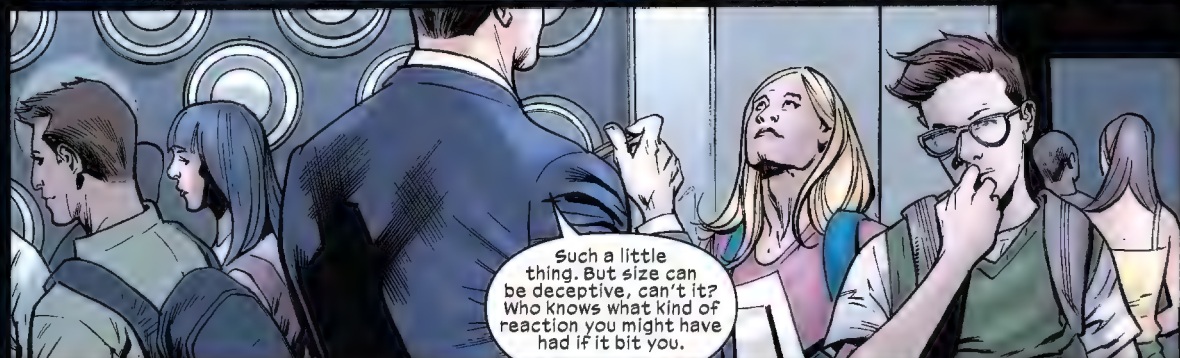
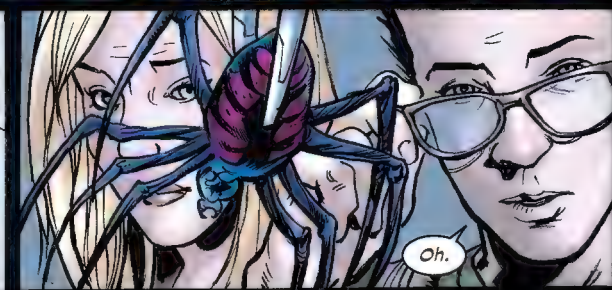
Dr. Schwinner has built some new machine. There's supposed to be a demonstration, and I don't want to miss it.

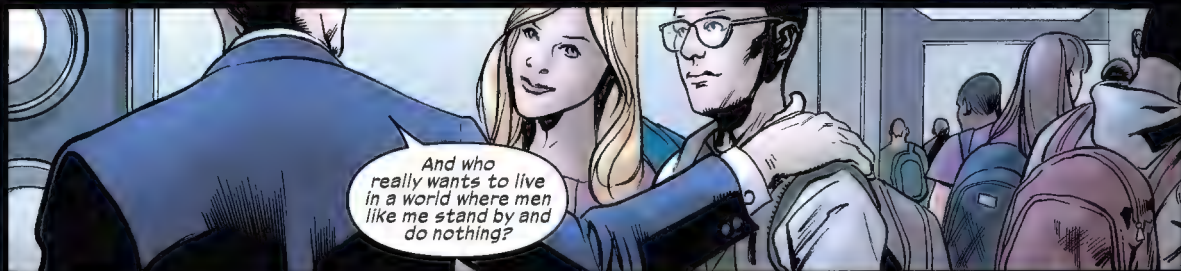
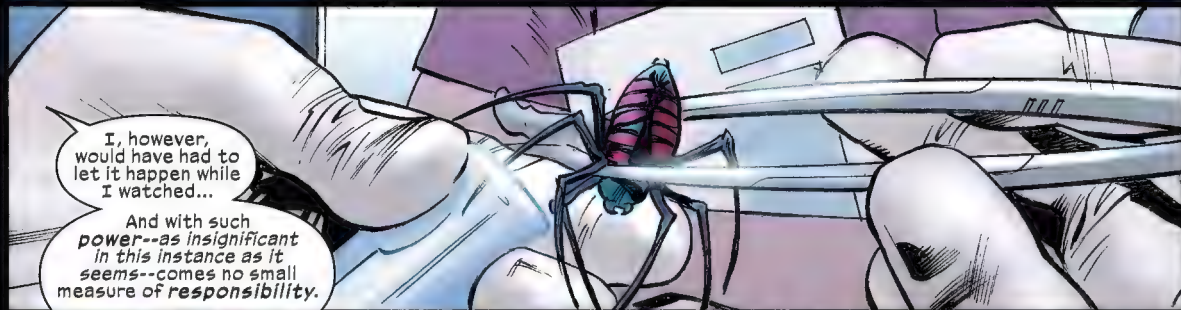


Wow. Look! There it is.

Maybe it's just me, but it feels like this could be the thing that changes the world.



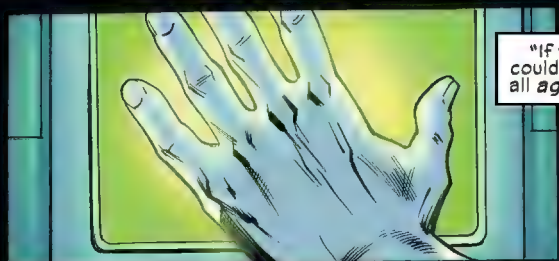
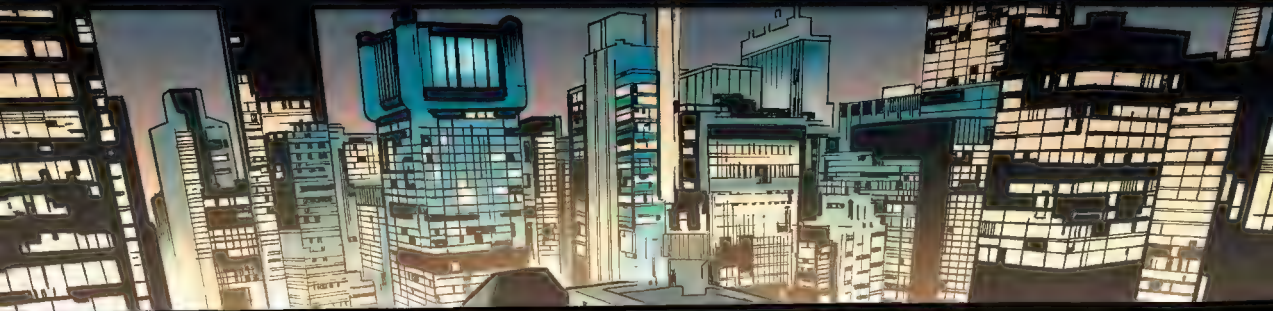




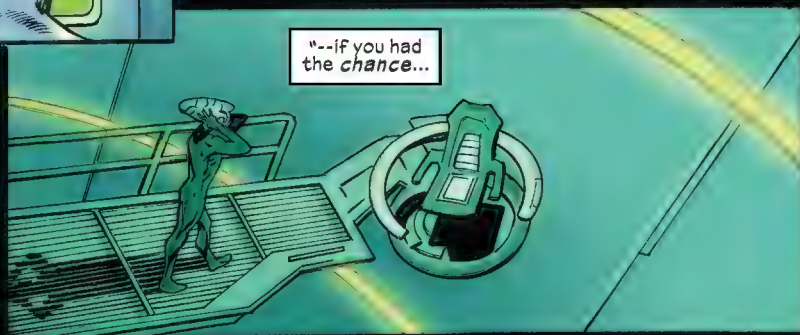




CHAPTER TWO: “DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE”



"If you
could do it
all *again*--



"--if you had
the *chance*...



"...would you
erase me from
existence?"



"Of course, there will be differences in another universe. Deviations and branching possibilities..."

"A twisted mirror which casts only similar reflections."



"Still, there is an Asgard."

"And with it, a son of lightning and thunder to deal with. A king of lies to place on a throne..."

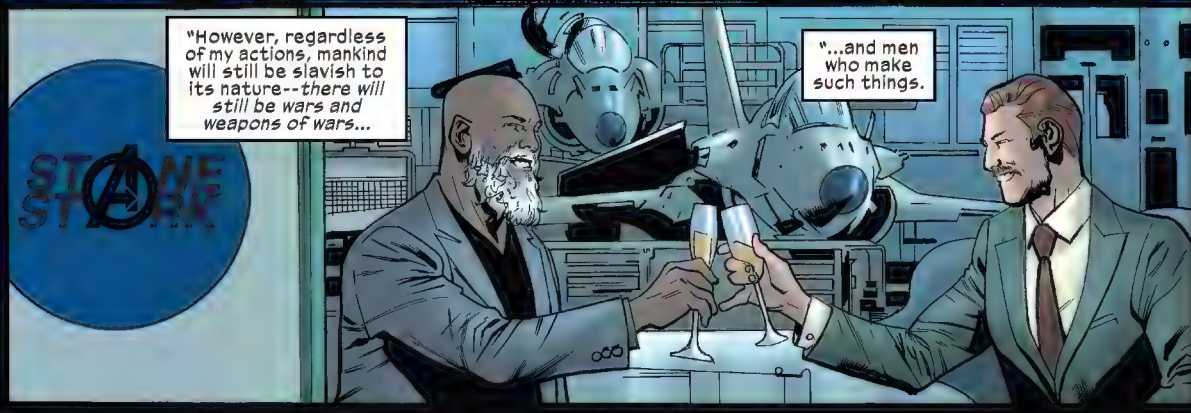


"A Bifrost to shatter."



"A rocket launch to delay by hours, and a cosmic storm missed."

"The fantastic reduced to something...more manageable."



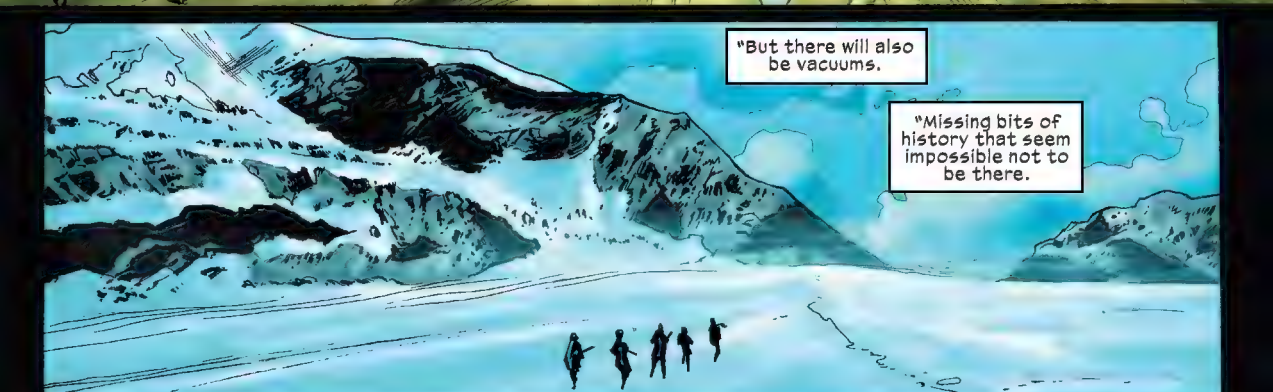
"However, regardless of my actions, mankind will still be slavish to its nature--there will still be wars and weapons of wars..."

"...and men who make such things."



"Bullets will
always be fired.
Bombs will always
explode..."

"There will be
fallout to manage,
and it will be. By one
monstrous means
or another."



"But there will also
be vacuums."

"Missing bits of
history that seem
impossible not to
be there."



"For example, I found no
man in the ice to murder.
It seems this world would
never have had a Super-
Soldier to lead them..."

"No paragon of a
better time full
of better men."

"It was fitting
to find a
world that
craves me."



"Once, I remade
myself--from
ordinary hero
to Maker."

"Once, I remade a
city--and in it, I lived
a thousand years and
crashed the future
into the present."

"But I look
back now on all
I accomplished
with nothing
but regret..."

"...and the shame
of a man who
imagined much,
much too small."

"I can do
so much
better."



ULTIMATE INVASION

WRITER: **JONATHAN HICKMAN**
PENCILER: **BRYAN HITCH**

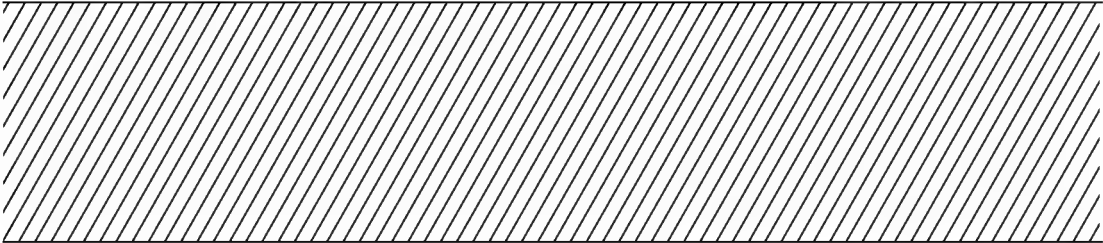
INKER: **ANDREW CURRIE**
COLORIST: **ALEX SINCLAIR**
LETTERER: **VC's JOE CARAMAGNA**
COVER ARTISTS: **BRYAN HITCH & ALEX SINCLAIR**
VARIANT COVER ARTISTS: **INHYUK LEE; JULIAN TOTINO TEDESCO;
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ADDITIONAL LOGO DESIGN: **JAY BOWEN**
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EDITOR IN CHIEF: **C.B. CEBULSKI**

MAKER MEMORY LOG

ARCHIVAL DATA [BR_616]

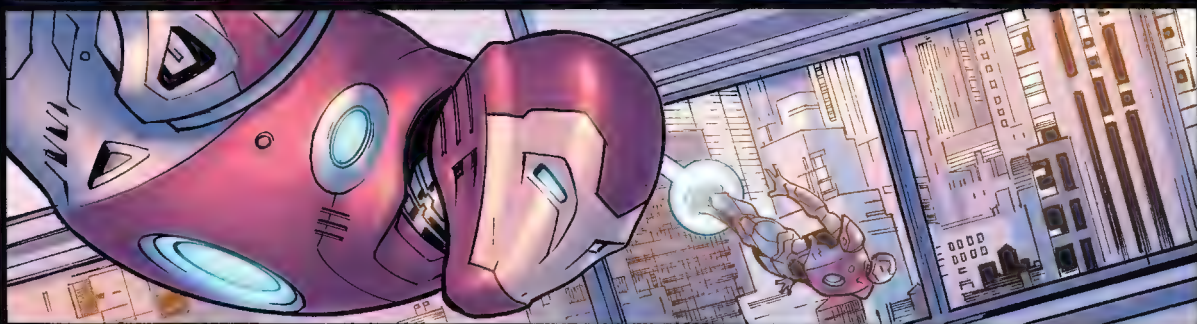
REVISED



WORLD EXPERIMENT: 6160

NAME	ORIGIN FILE	STATUS	NODE [REPOSITORY]	ARTIFACT
Jim Hammond	ZJYAU12	Deceased	12	Android Brain
Steven Rogers	IOD89GH	Undefined	--	--
James Buchanan Barnes	MWYJI21	Deceased	12	Blood Sample
Robert Grayson	BTW2900	Inactive	08	Quantum Bands
Jack Monroe	QOPKU03	Inactive	02	Blood Sample
Thor Odinson	OJTZA67	Captive	03	Destroyer Seed
Howard Stark	HYGTE1S_var	Controlled	07	Stane/Stark dBase
Reed Richards	LOSPE2A	Controlled	13-18	Dedicated Library
Susan Storm	LOSPE2B	Deceased	13	Blood Sample
Jonathan Lowell Storm	LOSPE2C	Deceased	13	Blood Sample
Benjamin Jacob Grimm	LOSPE2D	Deceased	13	Blood Sample
Henry Jonathan Pym	YJNS719	Inactive	06	Pym Generator
Robert Bruce Banner	UBB128B	Controlled	04	Blood Sample
Peter Benjamin Parker	LLOM223	Inactive	04	Biological Catalyst
Janet Van Dyne	PPLU17X	Inactive	01	Pym Generator
Stephen Vincent Strange	90128BQ	Captive	09	Eye of Agamotto

Manhattan.



Is this something new?

Or does he always show off like this when he takes the new suit out for a spin?

Every single time, Mister Stane. Sometimes I don't think Dad considers a test run complete until he's waved at every lady in upper-middle management in the city.





Don't believe a word of it, Obadiah. As my dear son is aware, I only stop to wave at the very pretty ones.

Oh, here we go again.



It's a little much, isn't it, Mister Stark?

Hasn't the world had enough of playboy billionaires getting everything they want and deserving absolutely none of it?



Well, I wanted the perfect English butler and just look what I had to settle for. And you shouldn't be so angry that the technocrats won, Jarvis--things could have been much, much worse.

But speaking of what I want and wanting it right now--what happened to those Vodkas and Orange I asked for?



Vodka and Orange? It's 10 A.M., Howard.



Not in Latveria, old boy.

Cheers, by the way.



So. At the risk of--once again--being lectured to by my lifelong friend and trusted business partner, are you sure I have to do this?

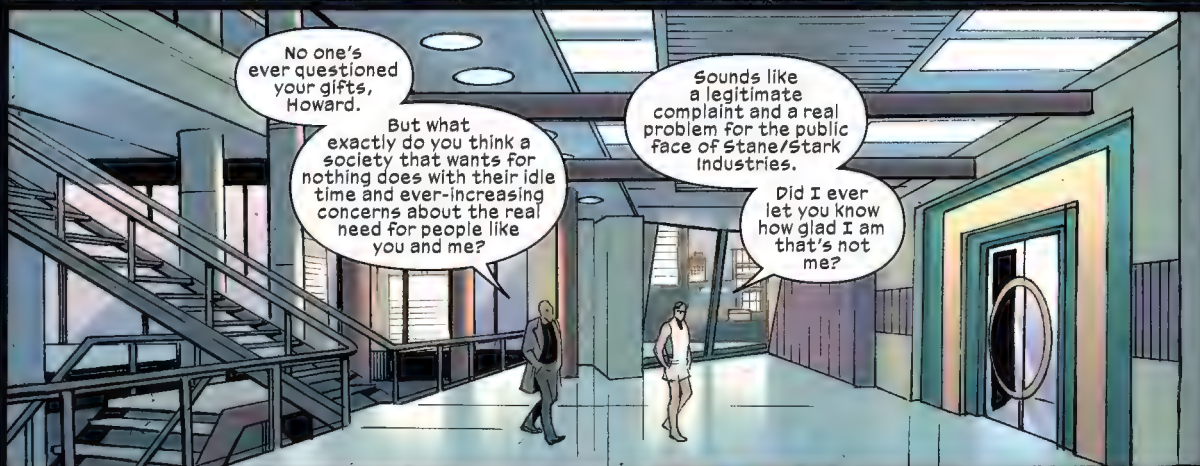
It's time, Howard.



No one begrudges your abilities, especially not me, but the two of us sit at the head of the umbrella corporation that literally runs this part of the world. There's a political aspect to this.

You need to get out of the lab. Show that billion-dollar face. Let the people love you. There's more important things out there than building miracle machines and life-altering inventions.

Tell that to all of the people who--thanks to me--no longer suffer from heart disease or die from twelve different kinds of cancers. I've never needed the applause, Obadiah. I'm happy settling for results.

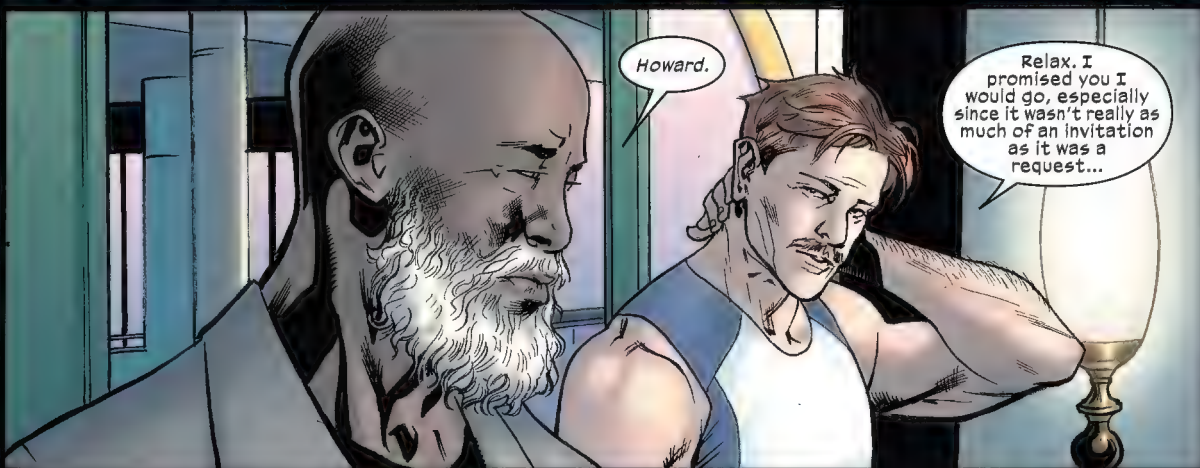


No one's ever questioned your gifts, Howard.

But what exactly do you think a society that wants for nothing does with their idle time and ever-increasing concerns about the real need for people like you and me?

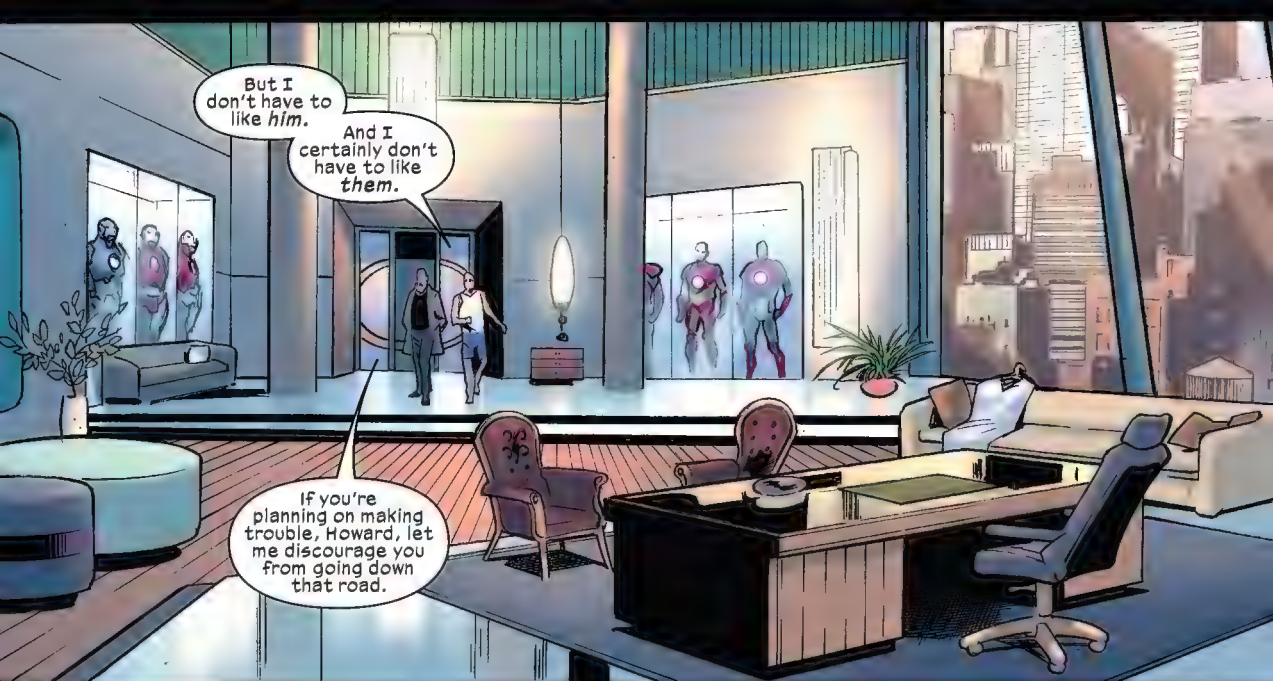
Sounds like a legitimate complaint and a real problem for the public face of Stane/Stark Industries.

Did I ever let you know how glad I am that's not me?



Howard.

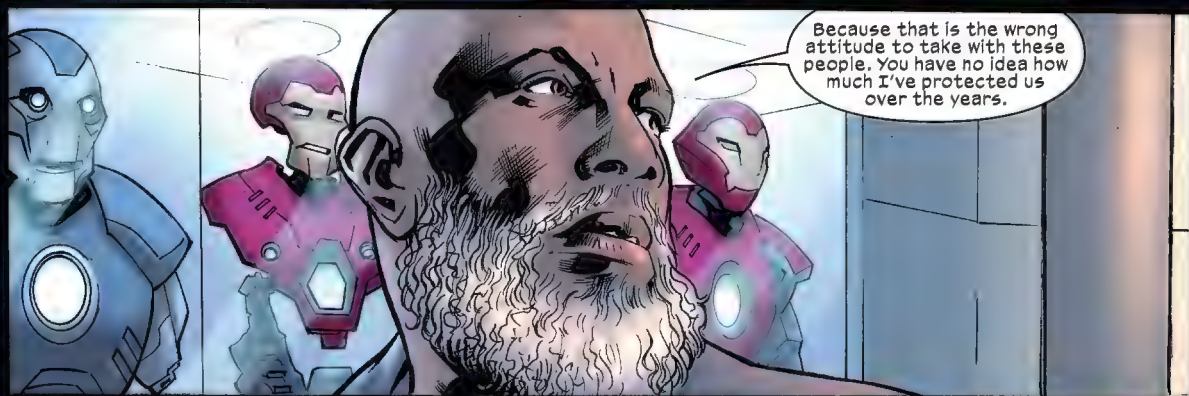
Relax. I promised you I would go, especially since it wasn't really as much of an invitation as it was a request...



But I don't have to like him.

And I certainly don't have to like them.

If you're planning on making trouble, Howard, let me discourage you from going down that road.



Because that is the wrong attitude to take with these people. You have no idea how much I've protected us over the years.



Maybe not. But the system that they want to protect works, in large part, because we are part of that system.

To do violence to us would be to do violence to ourselves.

My god...



Did you finally agree to go with me to the City because you have schemed up some radical restructuring of what works into something "better"?

Howard...do you have plans I don't know about?



In all seriousness?



Maybe I look out the window and I question what we've done and what we've made. I think of all my gifts--all my abilities--and I wonder, is this it? Is the world-as-it-is the sum total of what I am capable of?

I tell you, old friend, I whisper these questions to myself at night and I can no longer accept the answers.

Does that make sense to you?



More than you can imagine.



Well then, we'd best be on our way. Wouldn't want to be late--wouldn't want to disappoint our fellow world leaders. Pepper?

The jet is ready and waiting in loft three...



Your flight is scheduled to be four and a half hours. Which should be more than enough time to finish that research paper you're working on, hold the conference call with your engineering team in Alaska, and take your regularly scheduled one-hour power nap.

Thank you, Pepper.

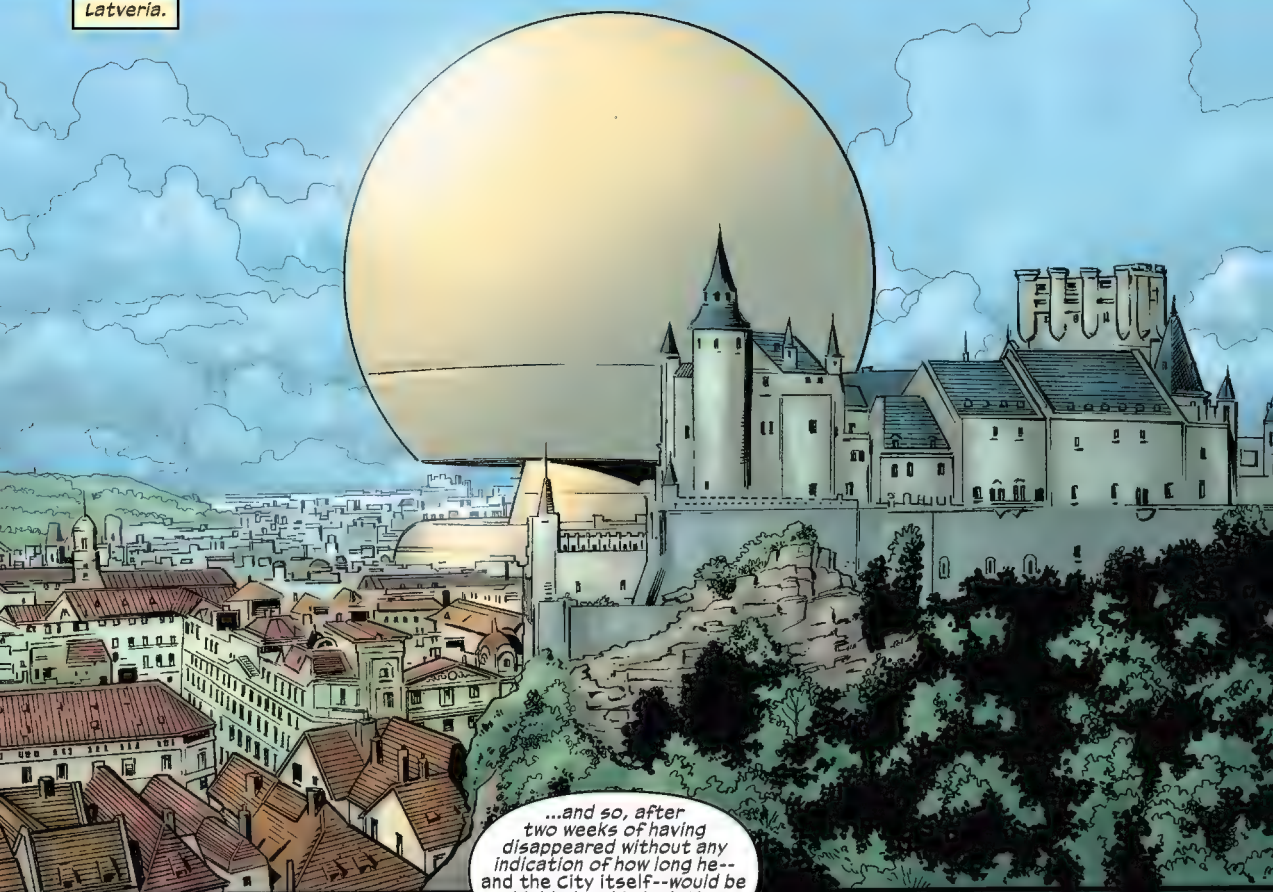
Well, Obadiah, that takes care of my agenda. What's on yours?



Just one thing, Howard...

It's time for you to meet your Maker.

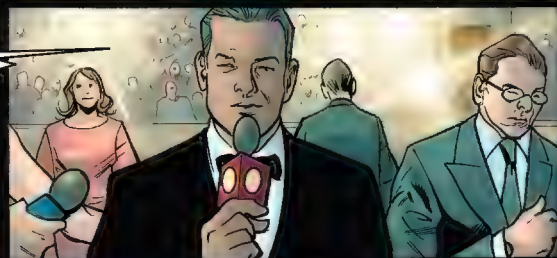
Latveria.



...and so, after two weeks of having disappeared without any indication of how long he-- and the City itself--would be shielded and in isolation, word has reached us...



...that the doors of the City will be thrown open and the great convergence of incorporated nation-states will occur. To that end, attending the day's events is a who's who of this golden generation...



...and there they are. Obadiah Stane and the mercurial Howard Stark--the finest of American technocrats.

True wizards of innovation who relentlessly force their nation forward...



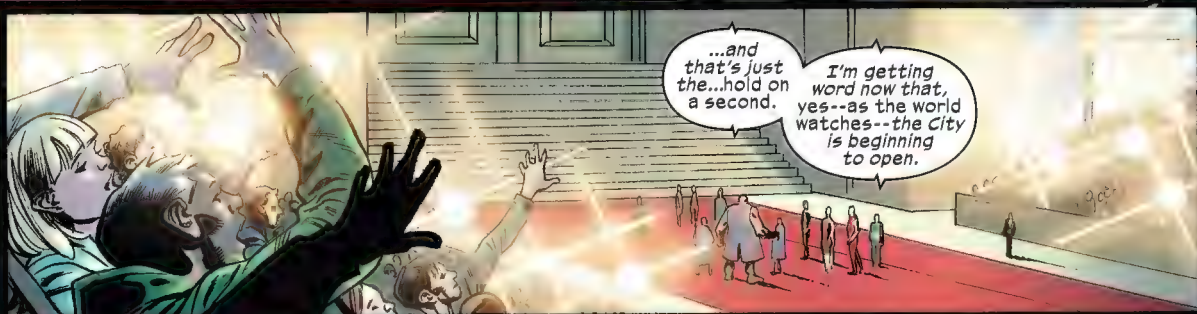
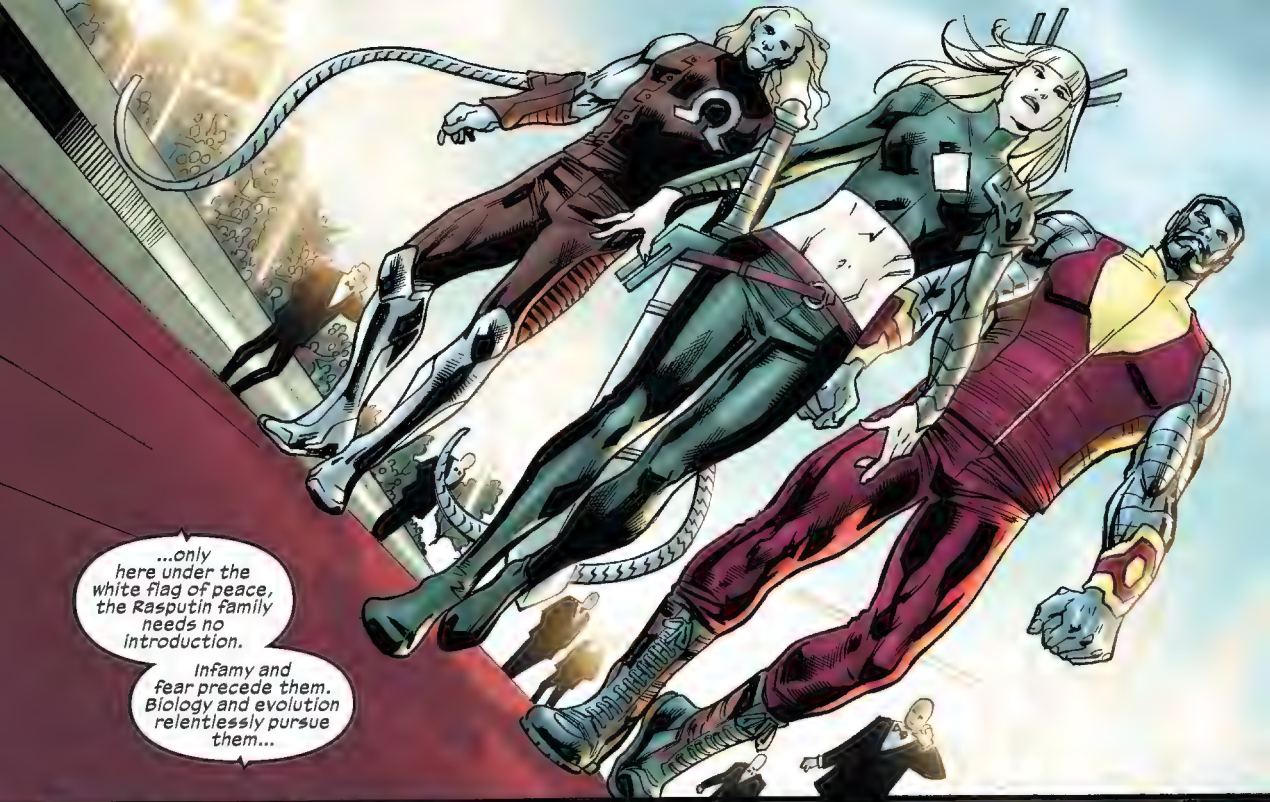


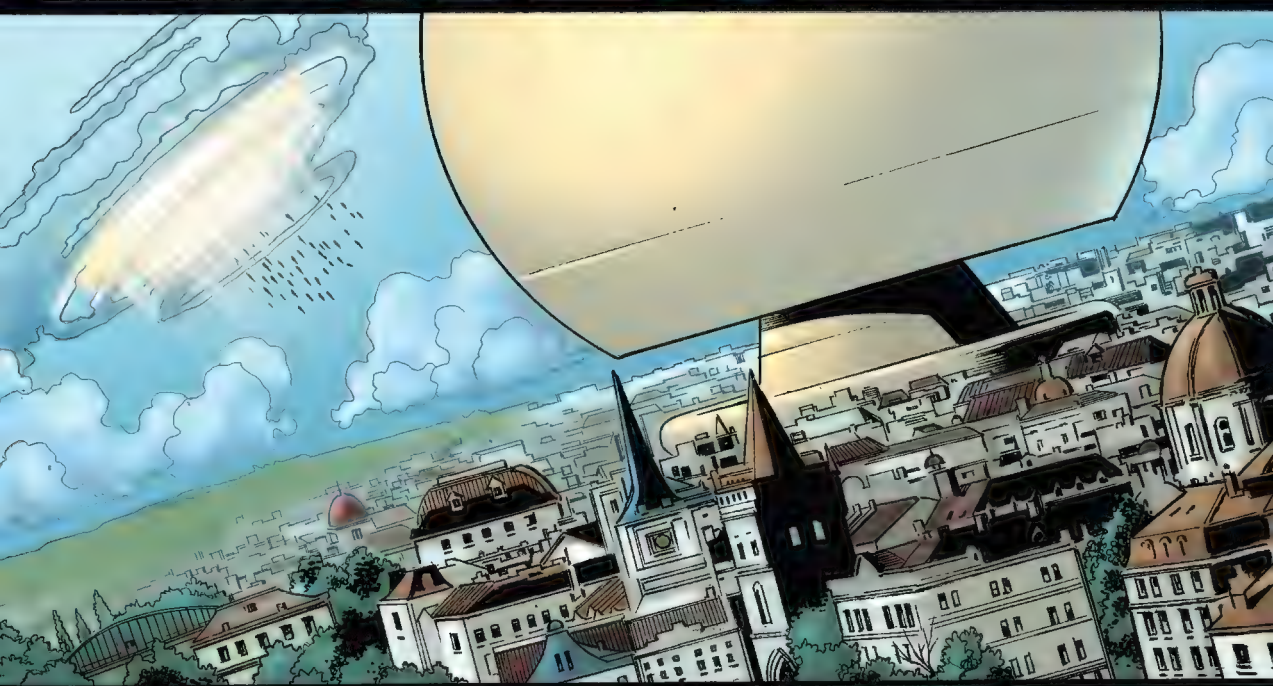
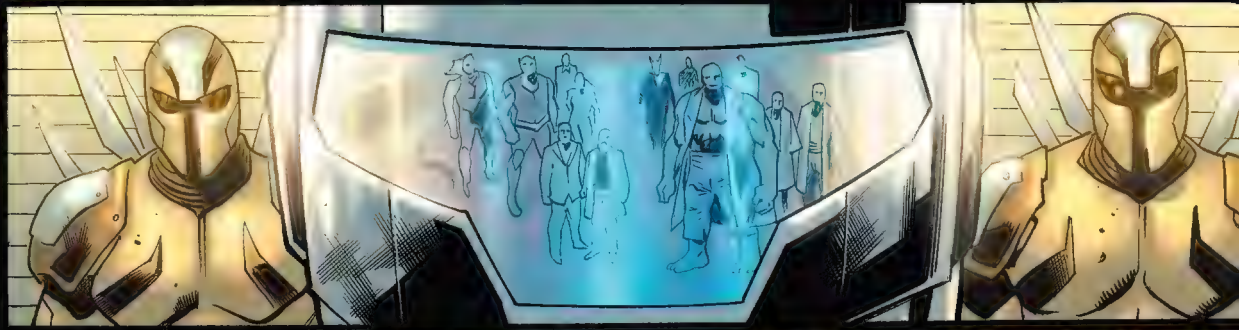
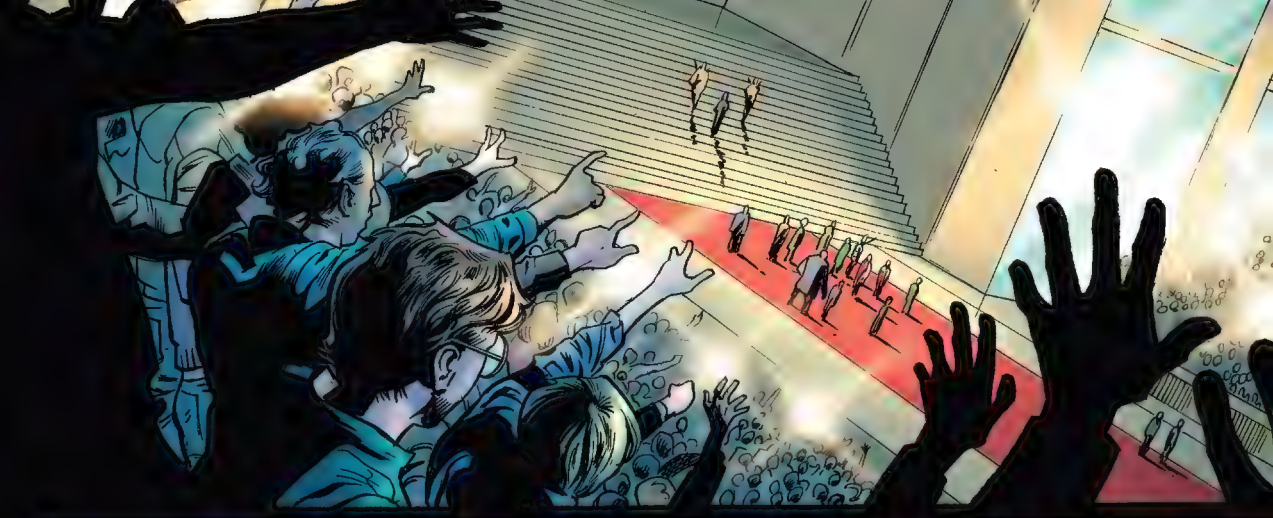
...it is said that the enlightened children of eternal light shine as brightly as they do because they rest in the shadow of the protective hand of their highest holy man, the legendary and immortal Hulk...

...a testament to the power of serenity and the epitome of those who resist the seductive call of rage and revenge...



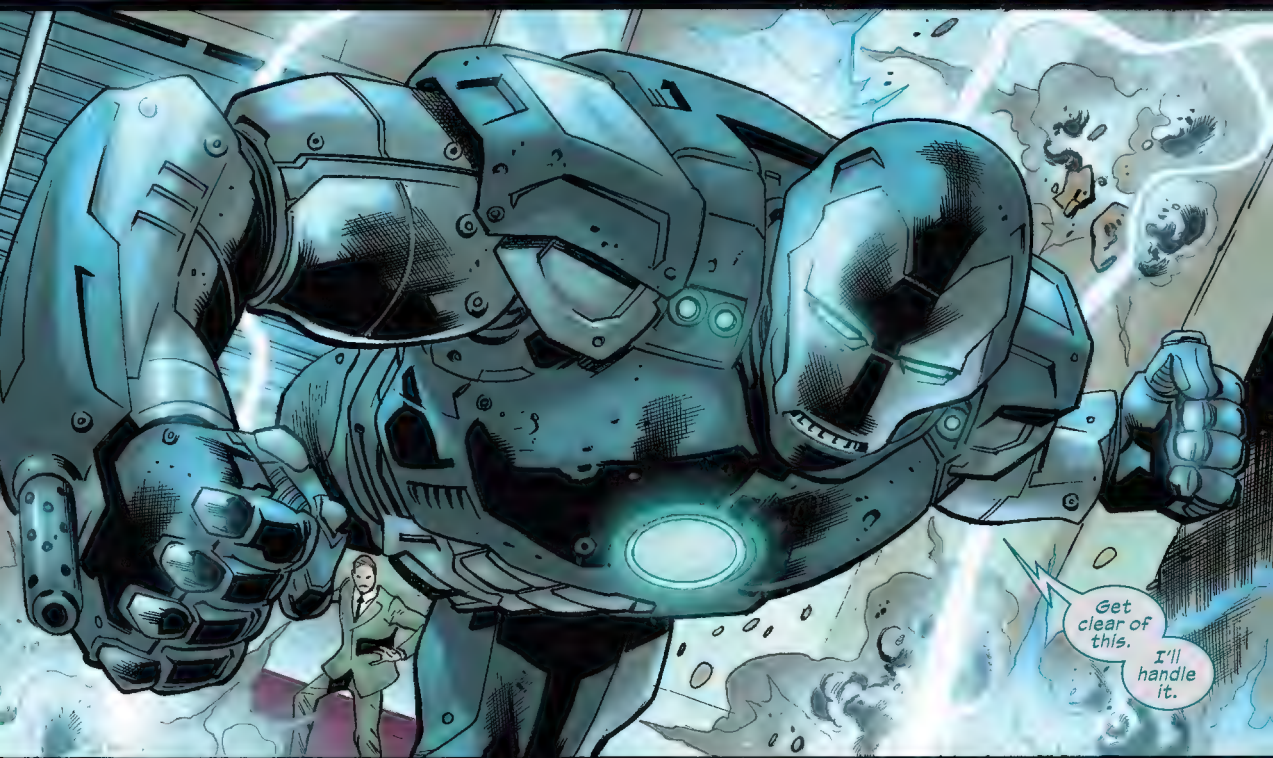
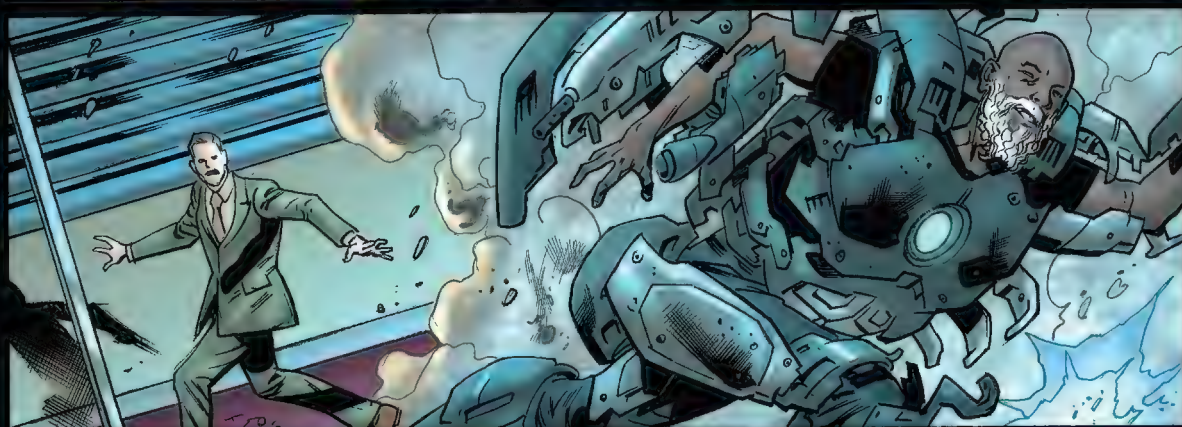
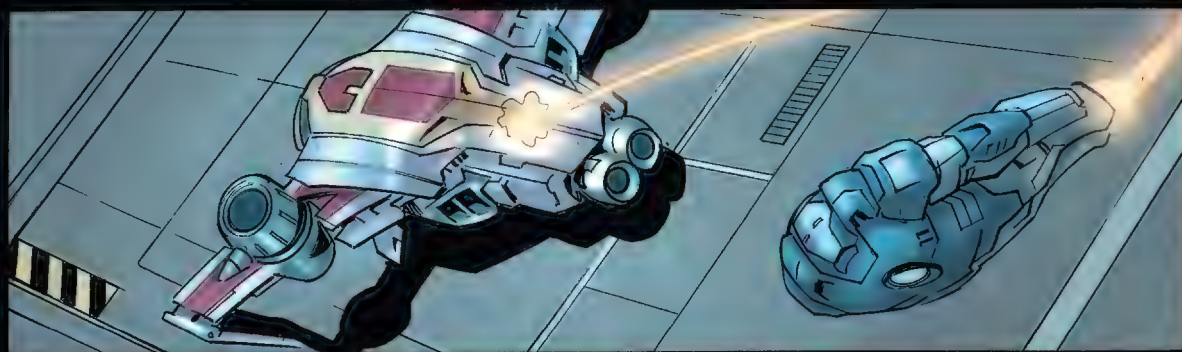
...and with the unforeseen consolidation of the three Pacific clans who could lay claim to the seat of power, it was the open Hand of the ascendent Harada-Yoshida alliance that gained supremacy of the...

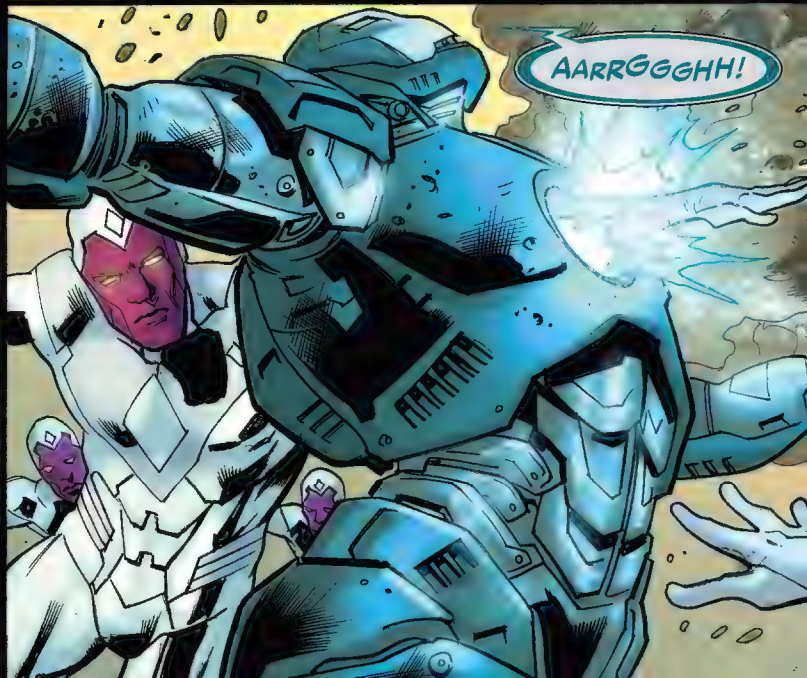


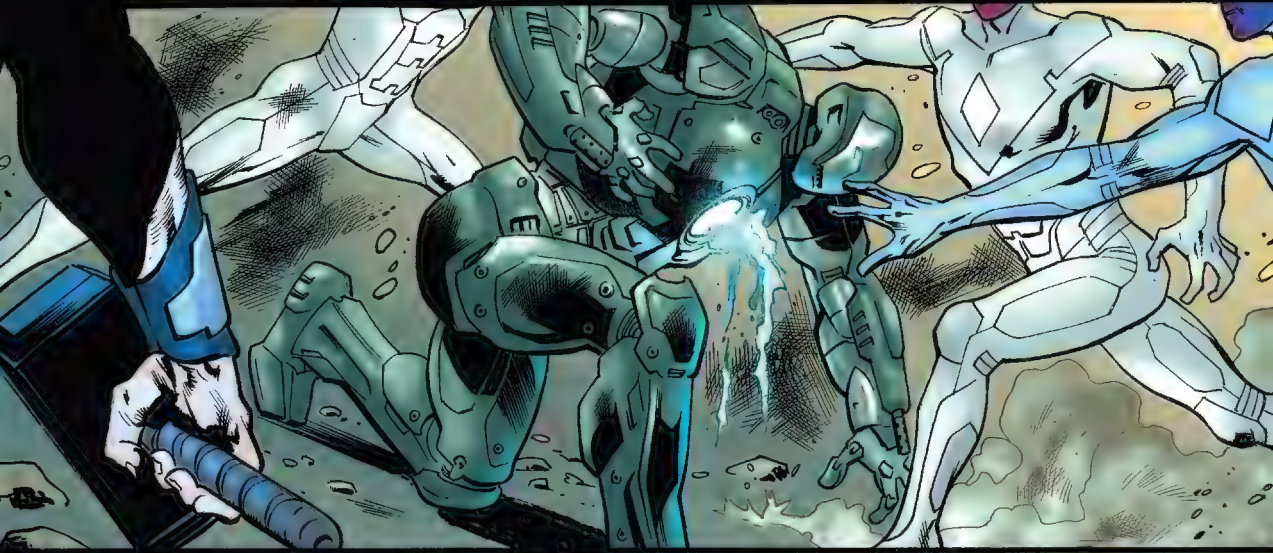


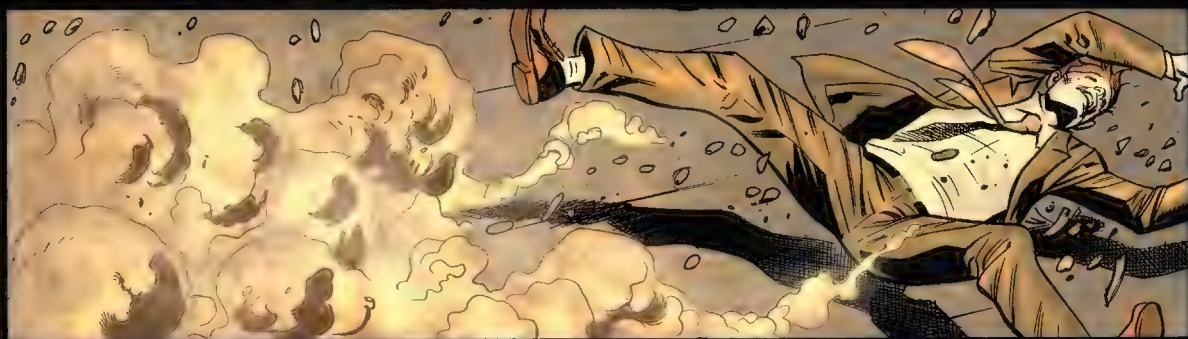


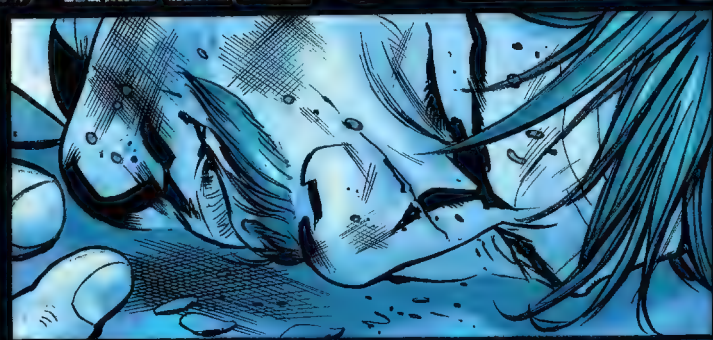
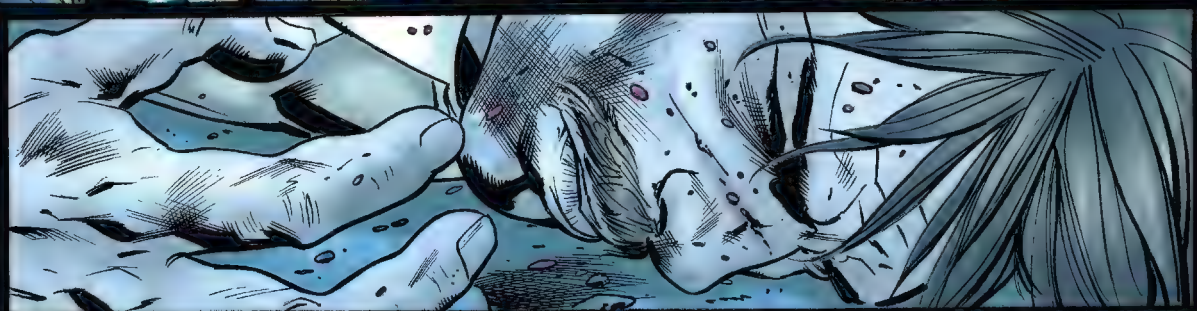
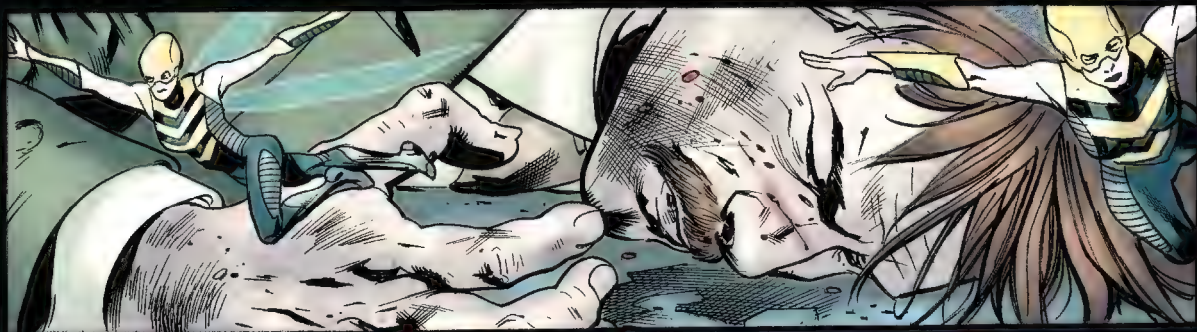












Howard...

Howard,
you can wake
up now.

Can
you hear
me?

Wha--?
What's
happened?

Terrible
news, I'm
afraid.

Obadiah
Stane is
dead.

...

I...
I saw it
happen.

I wish there
was time to
grieve...

...but *time* is something
we have very little of
at the moment.

Take a
look.

What
the...?



Who are they?



They are from the future. Temporal suicide bombers here to erase me--and possibly you--from history.

Why?



That's the question, isn't it?

Does it make you fear what terrible things you're going to do in your future? Or does it anger you that they tried to rob you of the chance to have one?



Honestly, I'm not sure I've ever bought into the idea of static temporal states.



No? No cause and effect looping around to eat each other? No snakes? No tails?

Want to find out?

How are you going to--?



Why are we here?

Have we done something wrong?

Is there some reason--?



Shhhh.

In the City, we've gotten rather good at genetic engineering: cellular legacies, protein archaeology and the recognizing of historical genetic markers.

We did a regressive scan of each of the future soldiers and discovered that almost all of them are identical designer clones--engineered recombinants--of seed DNA.

Then we tracked it to the source.

You can't possibly be going to--



How could you?

How C--?

Aaah--



Well, Normally, I loathe the sword instead of the scalpel, but somewhere in the future I just erased an entire army from existence.

I guess we learned a little something there, didn't we?

You idiot...

You know they're going to do the same to you, right?

Find you in your crib. Erase you and what you've done.

That won't work with me.

Why not?



Because I wasn't born here.

Not in this place, on this planet...or even this universe.

I emerged fully formed. If they come for me...it'll have to be at the height of my powers.



They did. And my friend died because of it.

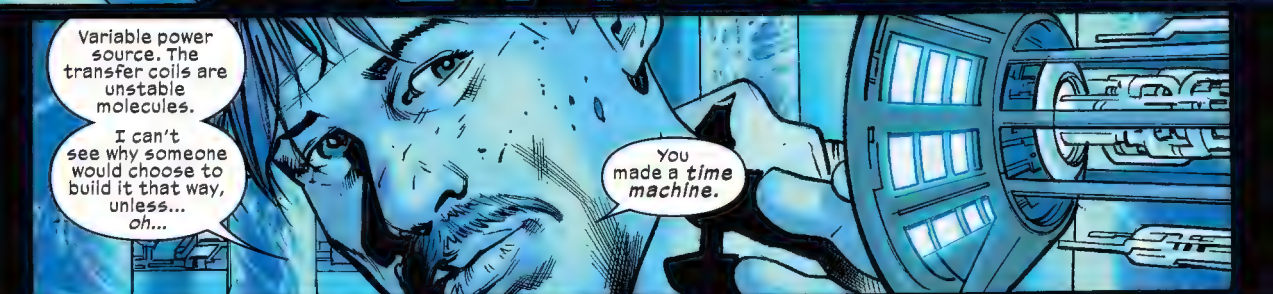


Hmmm. Come with me.

I want to show you something.



This is an
Immortus
Engine.



Variable power
source. The
transfer coils are
unstable
molecules.

I can't
see why someone
would choose to
build it that way,
unless...
oh...

You
made a **time**
machine.



This is why...this has
to be why they came
here...

It is **damaged**.
Currently non-
functional,
but--

You have
to **destroy**
it.

Forward
and backward,
bending wills to
my design.

I wouldn't
even if I
could.



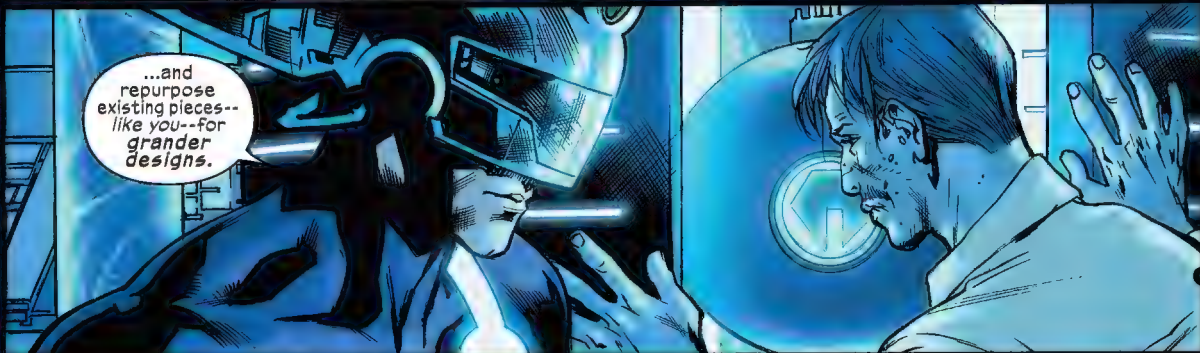
Look around.
Do you think this
perfectly ordered
society you live in
is how things were
supposed
to go?

It
wasn't.
I promise
you.

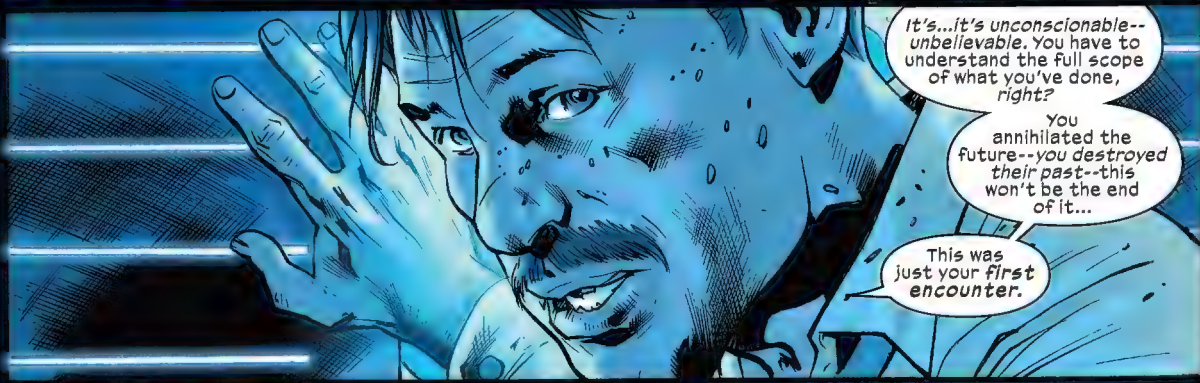


"I used this machine to remake the world into what it is now."

"Erase threats before they could emerge..."



...and repurpose existing pieces--like you--for grander designs.



It's...it's unconscionable--unbelievable. You have to understand the full scope of what you've done, right?

You annihilated the future--you destroyed their past--this won't be the end of it...

This was just your first encounter.



No. It was the second.



The first was two weeks ago...



Our meeting left quite an... *impression.*



... How are you not dead?

My body is not like yours. For self-preservation's sake, I chose to separate and redistribute my brain and vital organs long ago.

I will heal and it will take time, but I did suffer some damage.



My memory is...impaired. *Flawed and fractured...*

I can't trust what I remember because I am remembering things... *incorrectly.*

What I do know is that I need you. More than anyone else on *this world* and maybe others.



Why?



Because,
Howard
Stark...

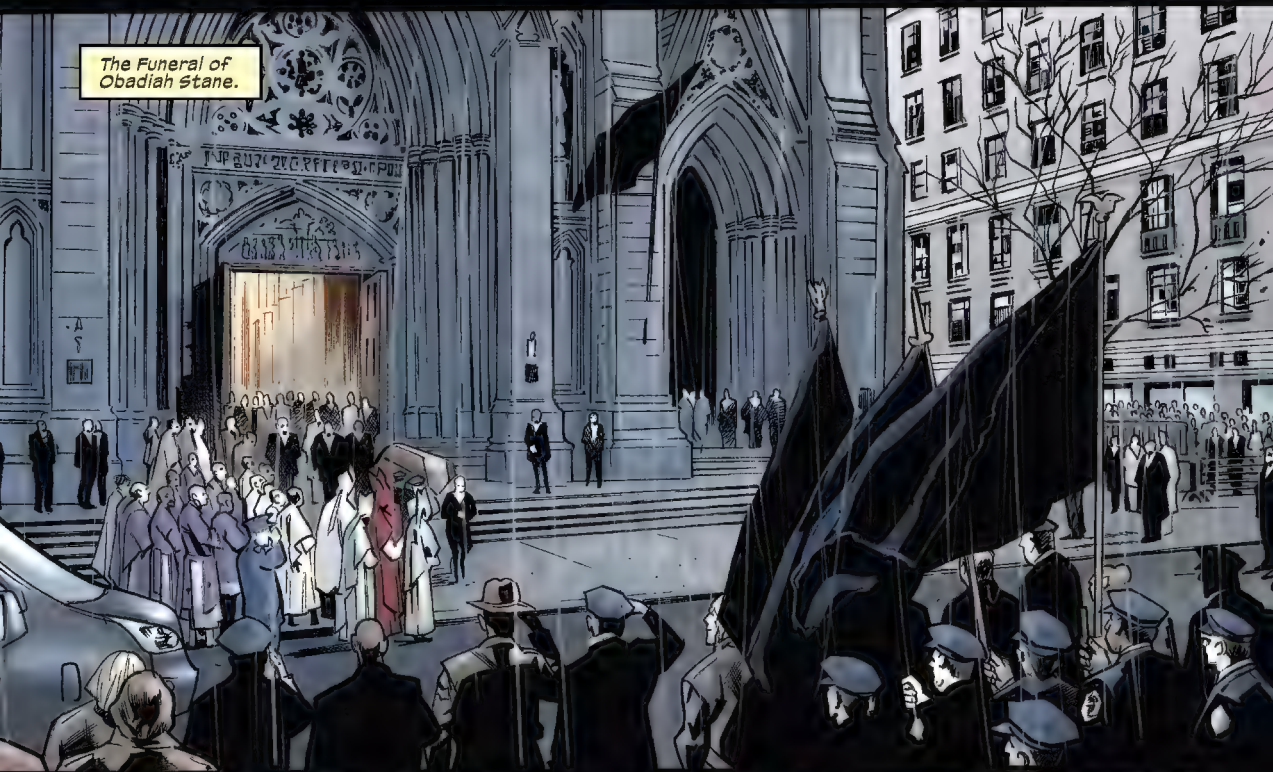
...I believe
you are the
one who built
this.

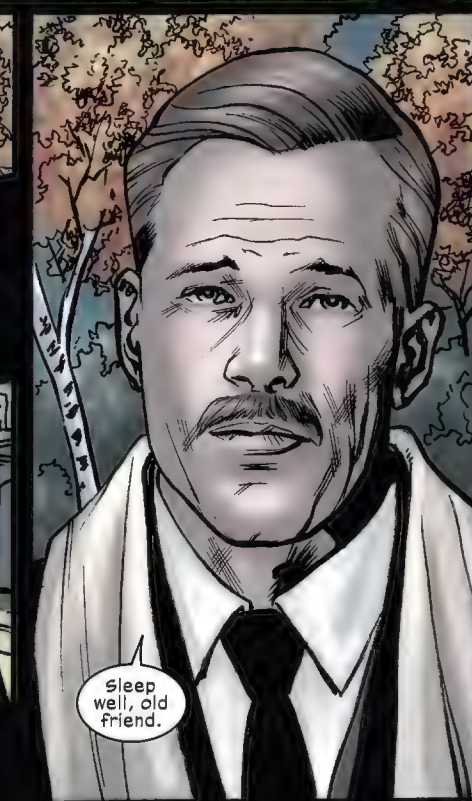
TO BE CONTINUED...

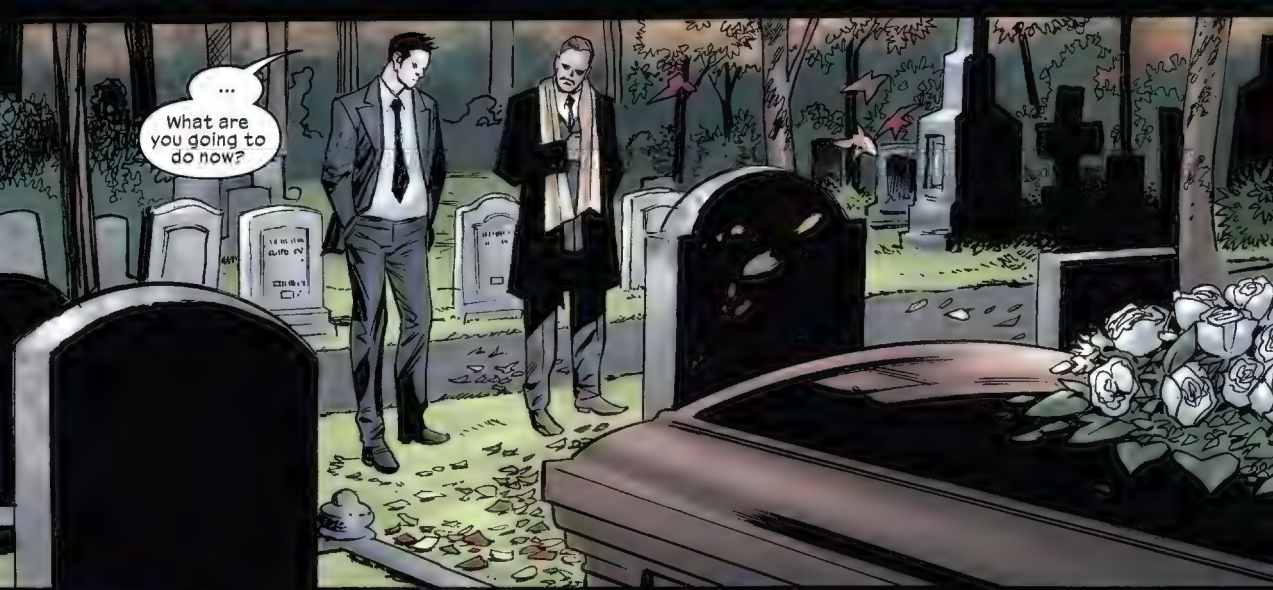




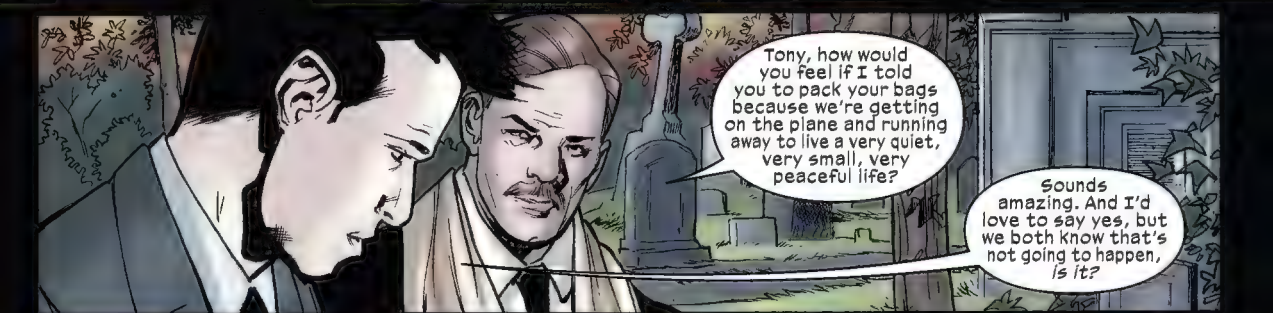
The Funeral of
Obadiah Stane.







...
What are
you going to
do now?



Tony, how would
you feel if I told
you to pack your bags
because we're getting
on the plane and running
away to live a very quiet,
very small, very
peaceful life?

Sounds
amazing. And I'd
love to say yes, but
we both know that's
not going to happen,
is it?



I saw the
attack on the feed,
but then they cut all
coverage--it was a total
blackout. Nothing for an
entire day. Then you just
showed up--back home
with Obadiah's
body.

What
happened,
Dad?

No.
It's not.



What
happened in
Latveria?



**CHAPTER THREE:
“THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS”**

ULTIMATE INVASION

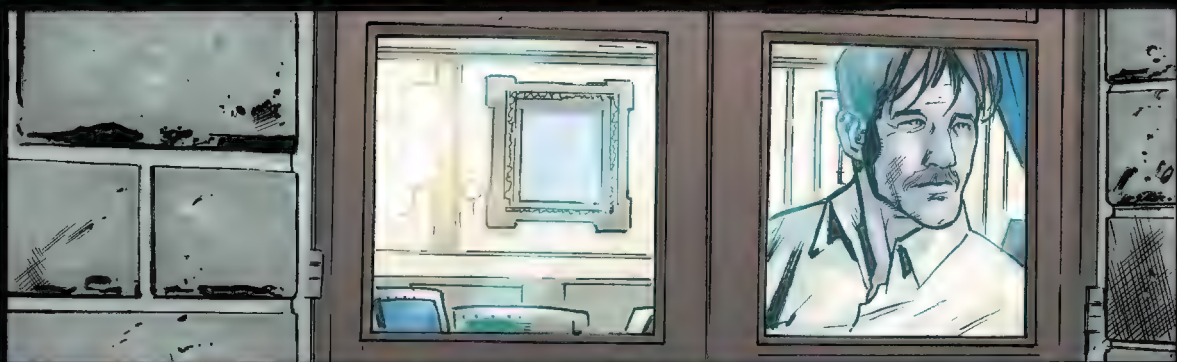
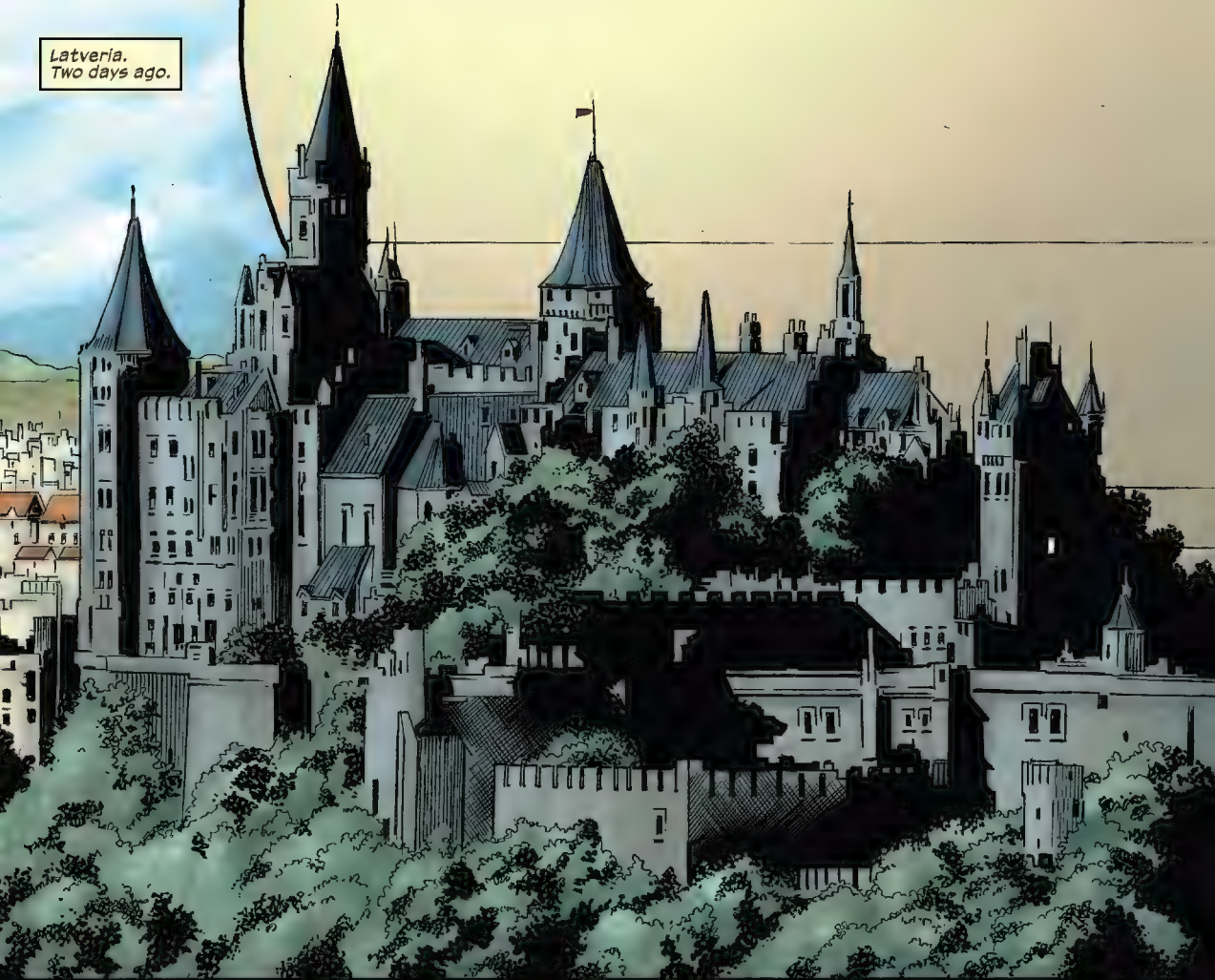
WRITER: **JONATHAN HICKMAN**
PENCILER: **BRYAN HITCH**

INKER: **ANDREW CURRIE**
COLORIST: **ALEX SINCLAIR**
LETTERER: **VC's JOE CARAMAGNA**
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EDITOR IN CHIEF: **C.B. CEBULSKI**



Latveria.
Two days ago.





I wanted to welcome you and introduce myself...

I am Emmanuel Da Costa.

I have to say, I've followed your work for years.

Unfortunate that it happens under these circumstances, but it's still a pleasure to meet you.



Thank you.
Nice to meet
you as well.

Feeling
a bit out of
place?

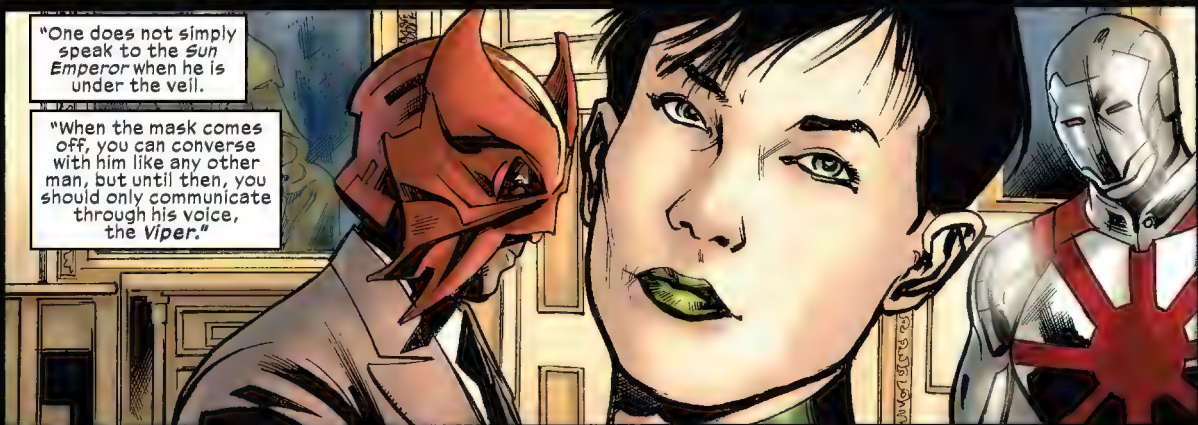


I recognize the names and
some of the faces, but as you
know, Obadiah normally handled
all of these "higher-level"
get-togethers.

I wasn't
concerned, as I'm
normally pretty good in the
room, but I have to admit,
I'm finding this one a
bit cold.

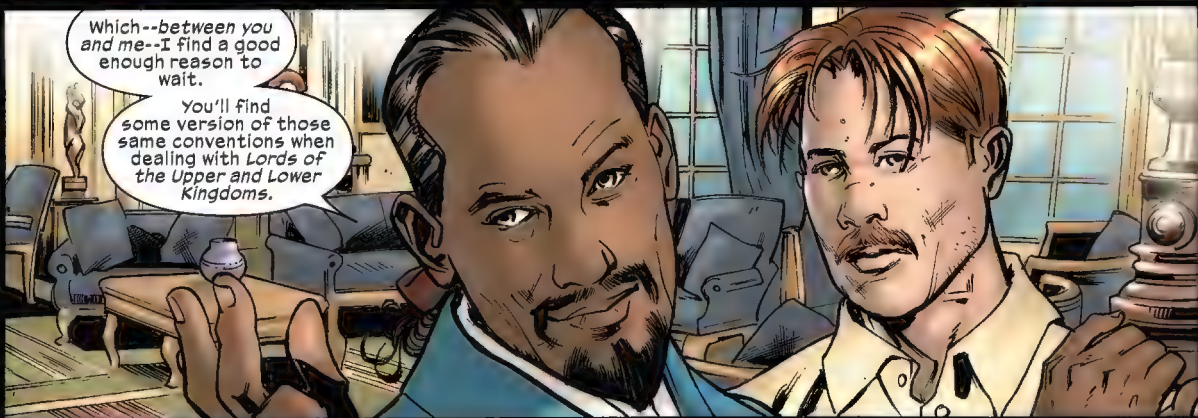
I tried to
introduce myself to
Yoshida earlier but his
samurai cut me off--and
by cut me off, I mean he
literally showed
me his blade.

Ah.
That's just
protocol,
my boy...



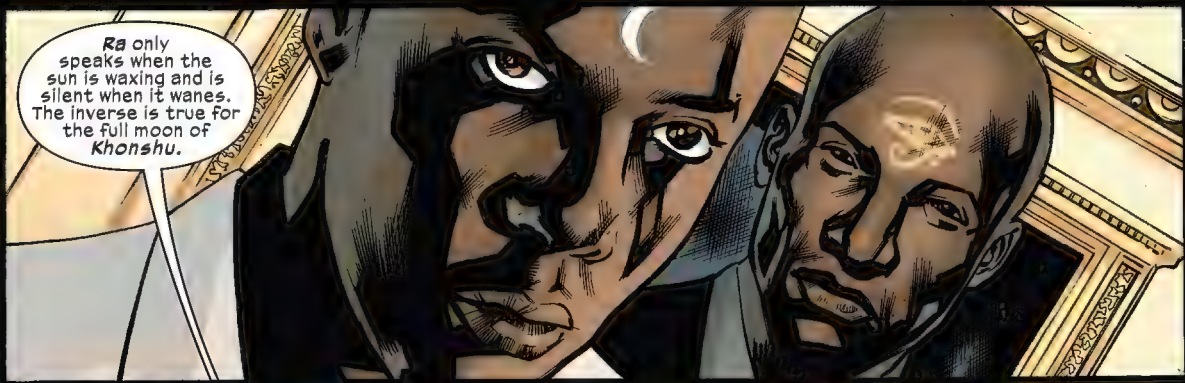
"One does not simply
speak to the *Sun
Emperor* when he is
under the veil.

"When the mask comes
off, you can converse
with him like any other
man, but until then, you
should only communicate
through his voice,
the *Viper*."



Which--between you
and me--I find a good
enough reason to
wait.

You'll find
some version of those
same conventions when
dealing with *Lords of
the Upper and Lower
Kingdoms*.



Ra only speaks when the sun is waxing and is silent when it wanes. The inverse is true for the full moon of Khonshu.



Ah. Here we go. Now here's a genial fellow.



Howard, this is Henri Dugarry.

Henri currently holds both the **Sword of Right** and the **Amulet of Right**, granting him providence over the entirety of the European Union.

Bonjour, Monsieur Stark. Quelle époque intéressante que celle dans laquelle nous trouvons.

Interesting is certainly a word for it.



And discord would be another.

Any word yet on what the purpose or meaning was behind today's attack?

I haven't heard a thing.

Nor have I, Monsieur Hulk.

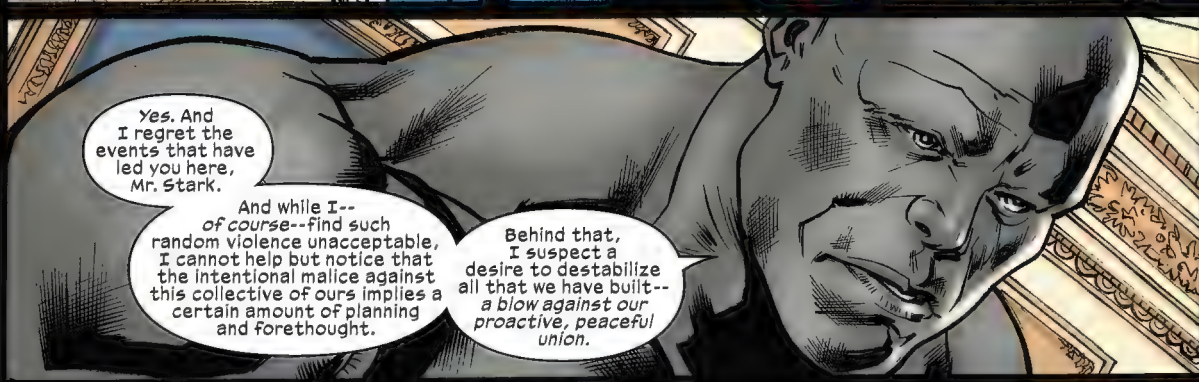
... I just got here.



Yes. And I regret the events that have led you here, Mr. Stark.

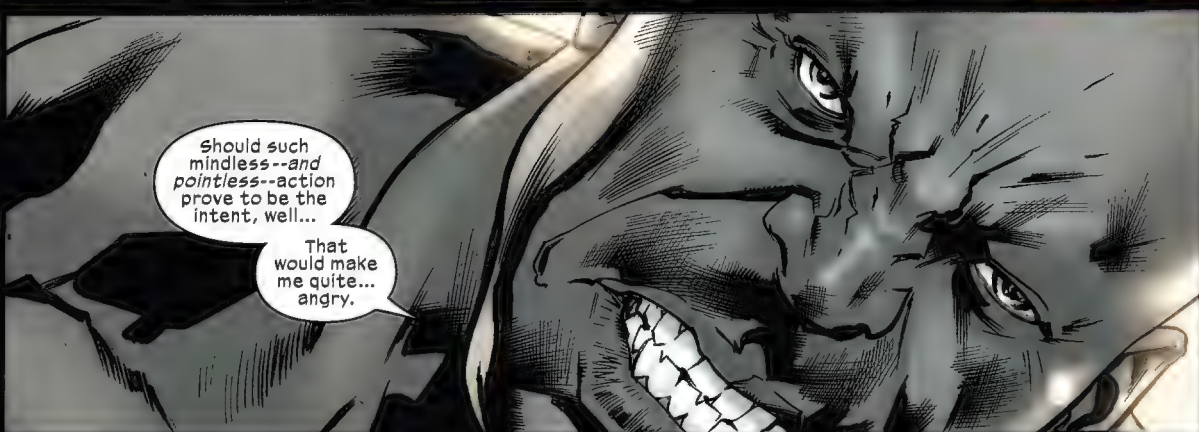
And while I-- of course--find such random violence unacceptable, I cannot help but notice that the intentional malice against this collective of ours implies a certain amount of planning and forethought.

Behind that, I suspect a desire to destabilize all that we have built-- a blow against our proactive, peaceful union.



Should such mindless--and pointless--action prove to be the intent, well...

That would make me quite... angry.





Okay,
let's hear
it!!!



Who the hell
attacked us
today?

And where--in that same hell he calls
home--is the Maker? We need to get
on with this--take action--and make
whoever that was regret
being born.

Une femme si
colérique.

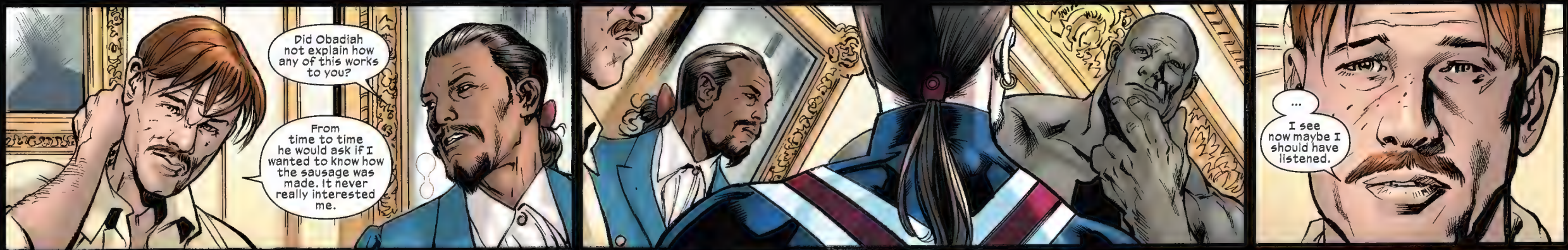


Definitely. But I'm
honestly surprised
you would meet
with her or her
companions.

Excuse-
moi? Whatever do
you mean?



The
Rasputins.
They're the
enemy.





While inside our non-adversarial nations, we rally our citizens against this great evil, and all participate in whatever pageantry is required.

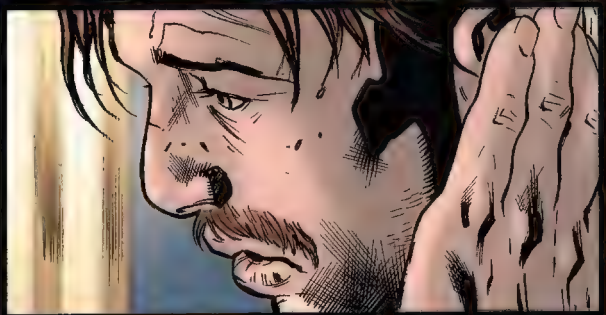
Then, at the end of a generation, another territory-- one that has spent the previous age becoming more and more belligerent--assumes the "rogue state" mantle while the previous one engages in a generation of performative regret.



Around and around it goes. Focusing the citizens' eyes on external threats and away from any internal failures of their own territory--

--maintaining the illusion of peace in an illusory time of war.

The Maker is a pragmatic and visionary man. He believes this is good because it works. And it does work--so we accept it as the greater good.

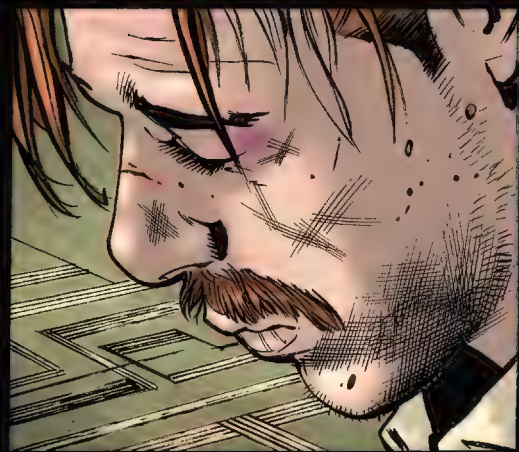


...
My god...



That might be the most insidious thing I've ever heard.





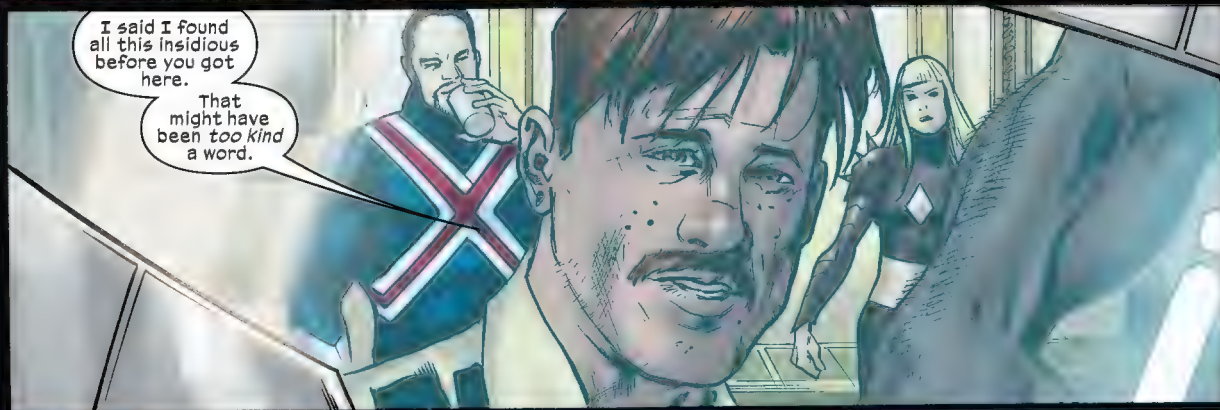
Of course, focusing on the shortcomings of mankind's nature makes it easier for those in this room to gloss over the other major reason we do this:

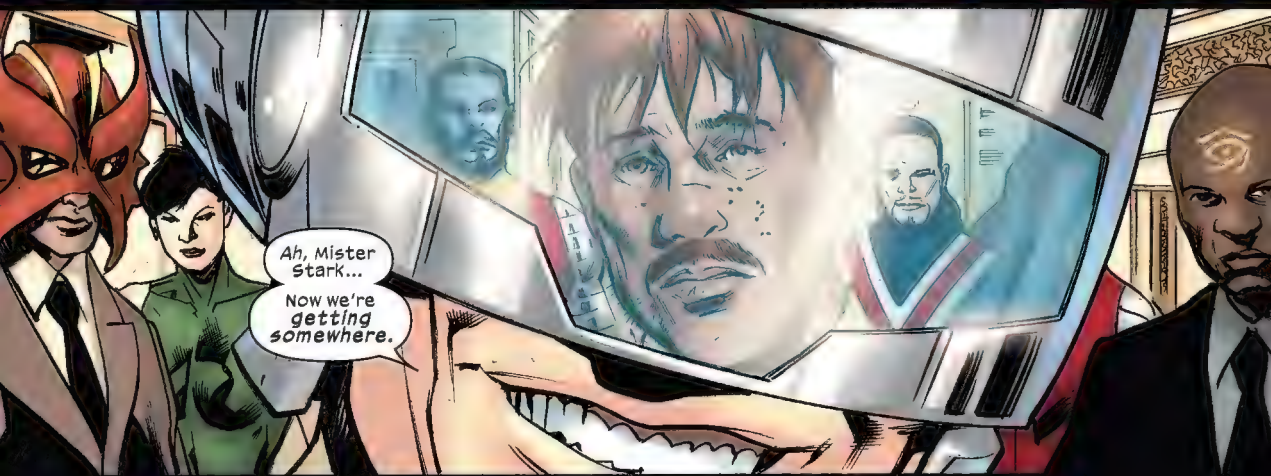
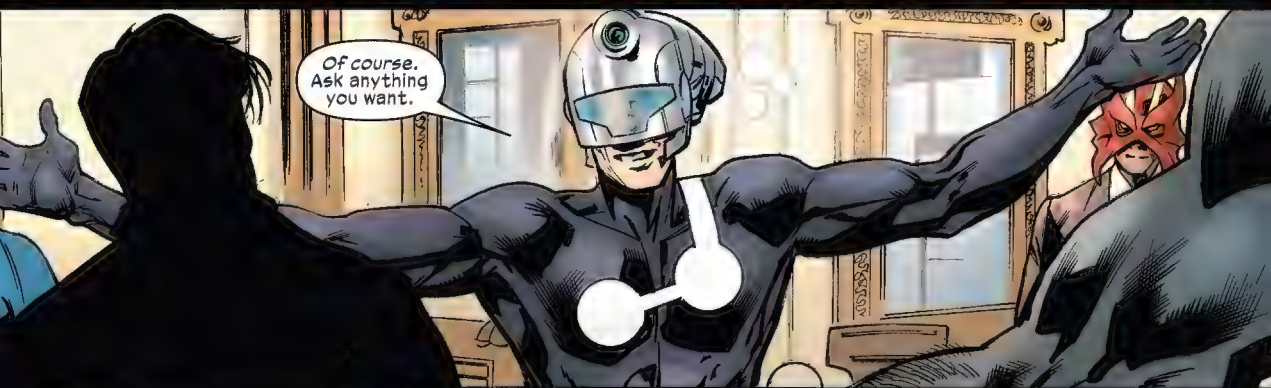
The little people hate us-- we giants who rule the land.



It's not how it used to be in ages gone by. Back then it wouldn't have mattered--the powerful would just roll right over the powerless if need be. We could build an empire on their bones, if we wanted...

But now they are a *collective*--instantaneously aware of just how many of them there are--and how much they uniformly hate people like us.





THE WORLD

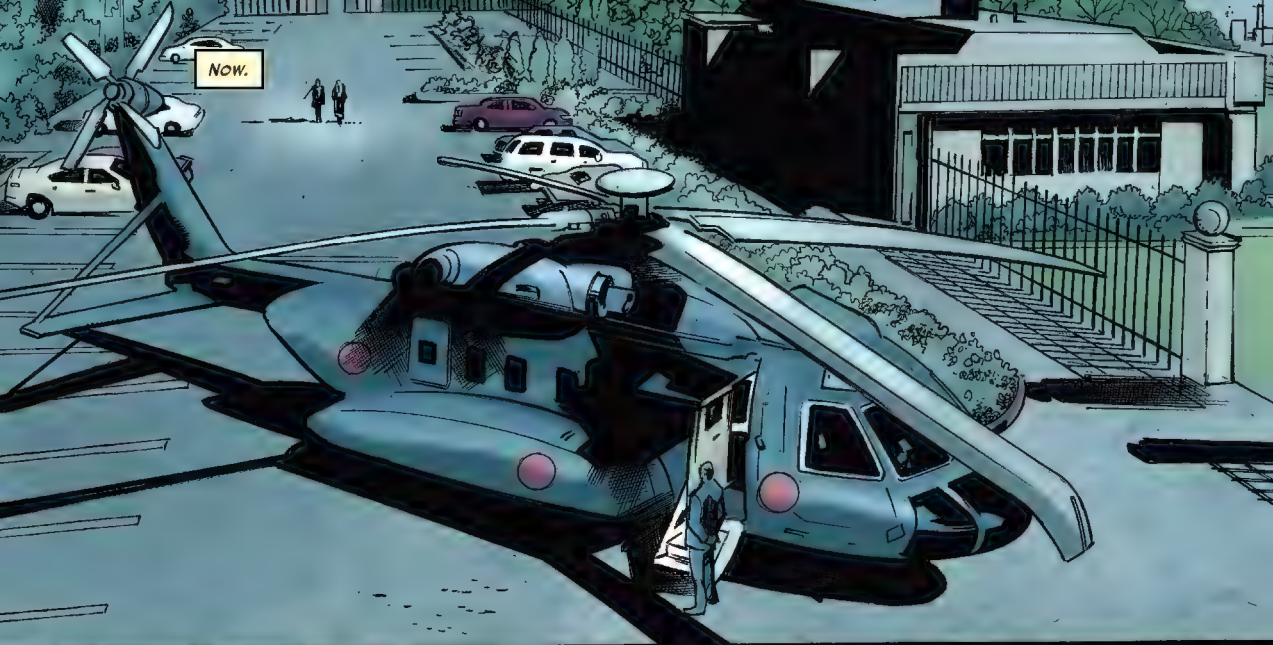


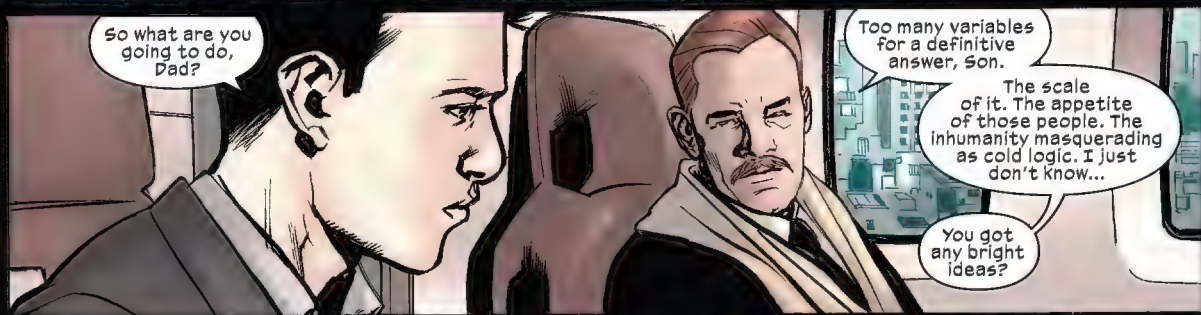
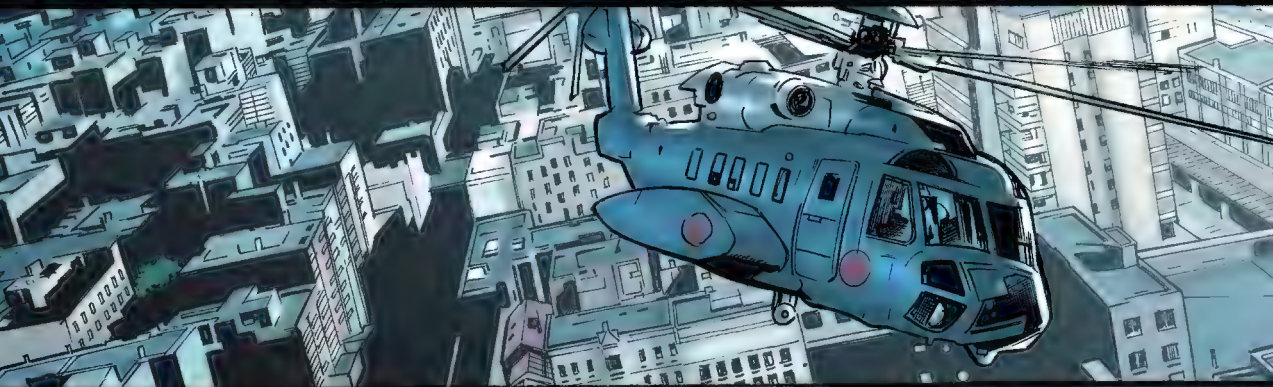
THE WORLD

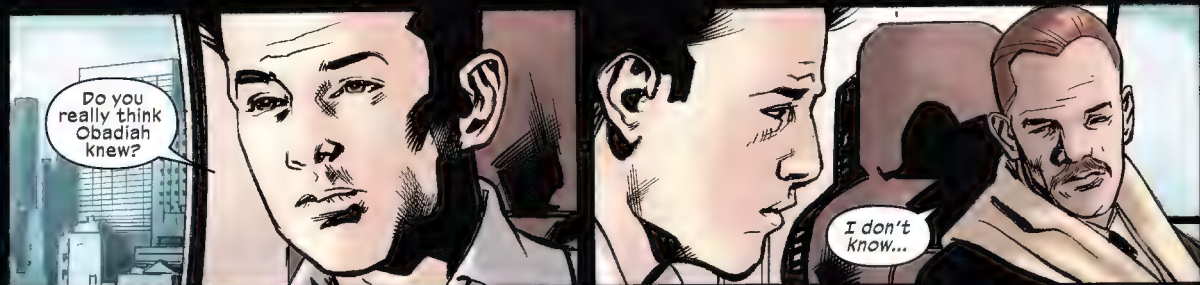
AS REMADE BY THE MAKER

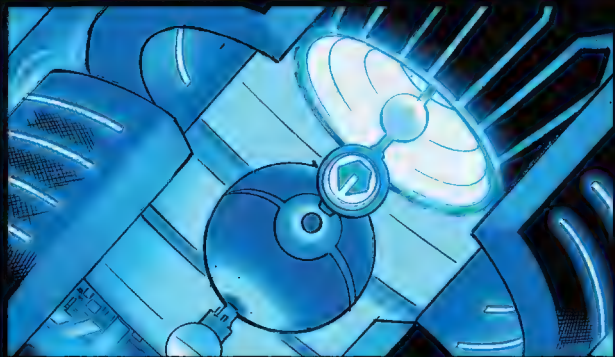
- THE NORTH AMERICAN UNION
 - REGIONAL SUBSIDIARIES
- THE SOCIETY OF SOUTH AMERICA
 - REGIONAL CLUBS
 - FRACTIONAL CULTURES
- THE EUROPEAN COALITION
 - REGIONAL GOVERNORS
 - FIEFDOMS
- THE CITY
 - LATVERIAN TERRITORIES
- THE UPPER AND LOWER KINGDOMS
 - REGIONAL DYNASTIES
 - LOCAL TEMPLES
- THE EURASIAN REPUBLIC
 - REGIONAL DIRECTORS
 - LOCAL SCHOOLS
- THE CHILDREN OF ETERNAL LIGHT
 - THE SHADOWS OF THE IMMORTAL HAND
- HI NO KUNI ("LAND OF FIRE")
 - DAIMYOS
- UNDISCOVERED TERRITORY

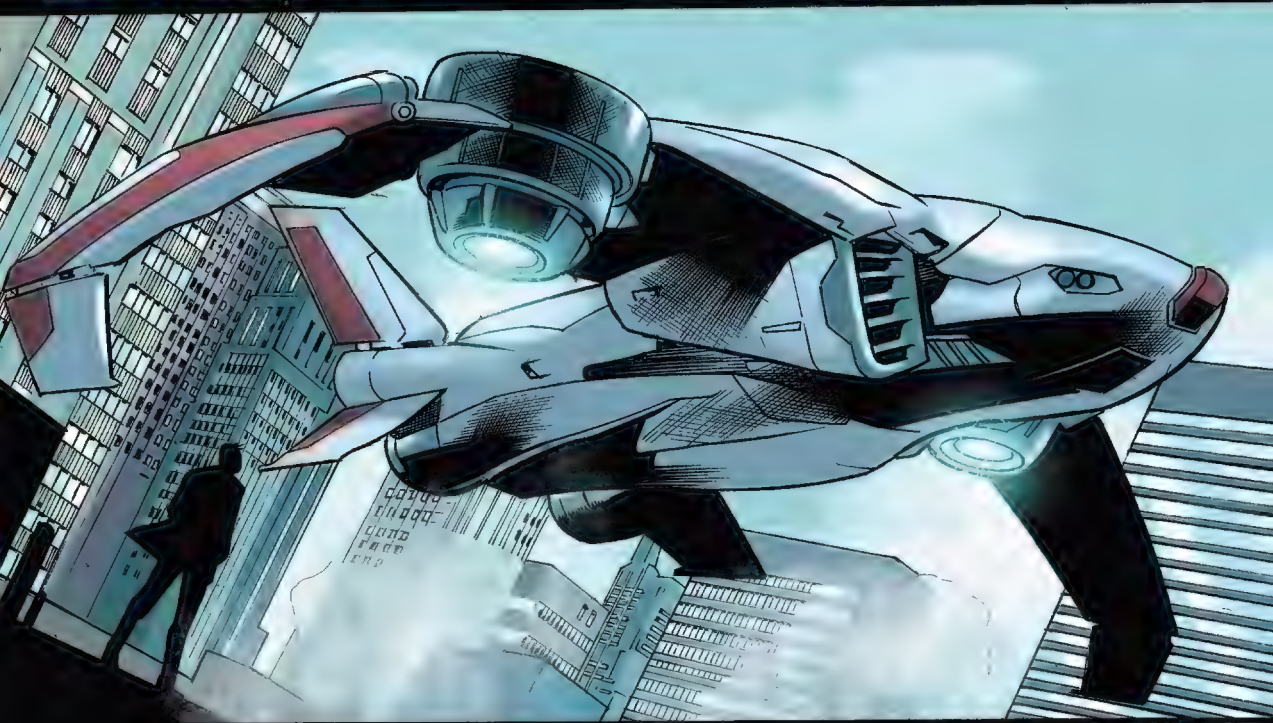
1963-2023



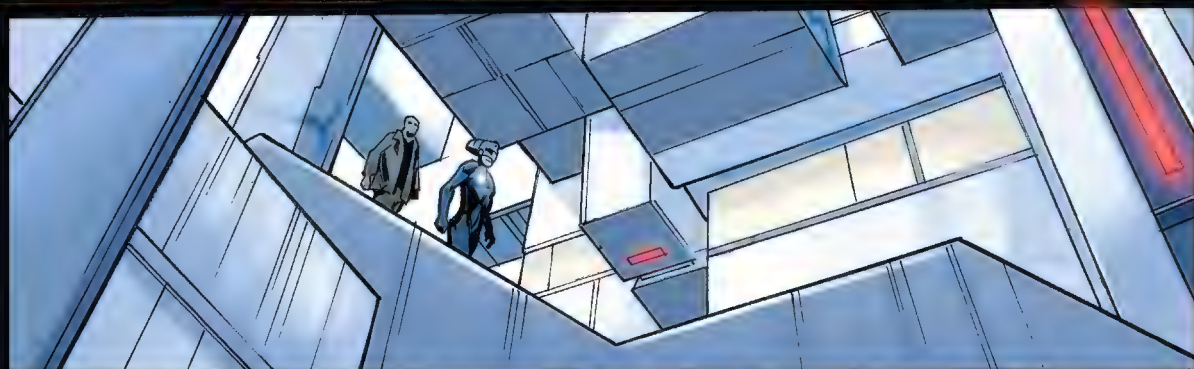






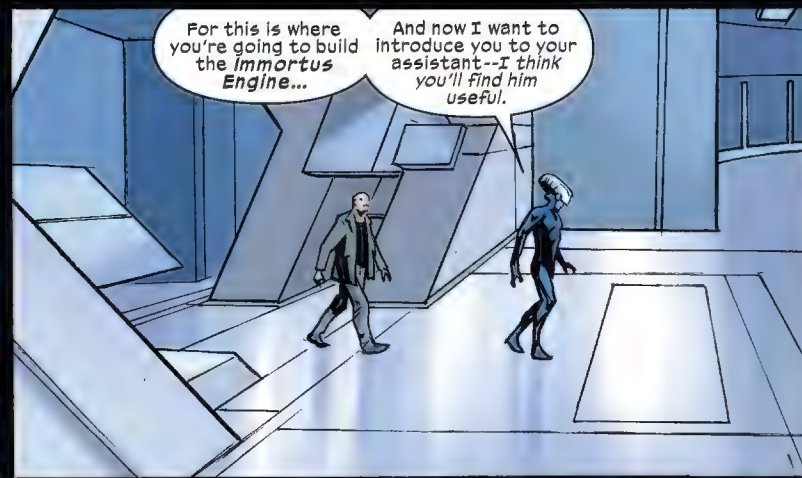


The City.
One day ago.



You know
I haven't.





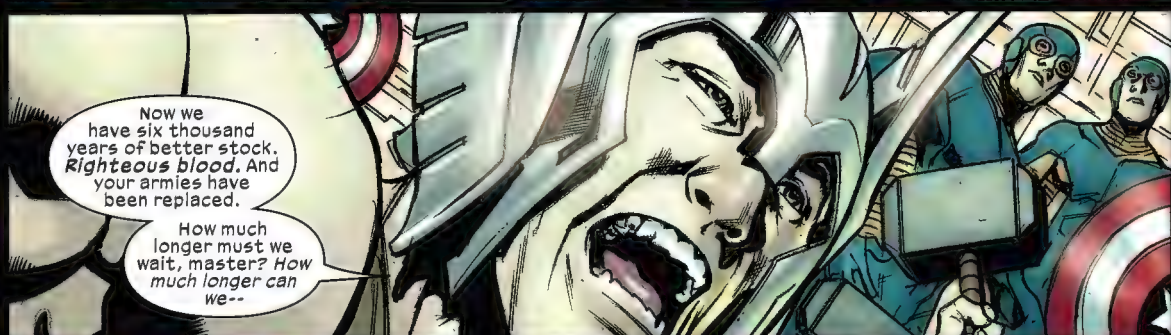
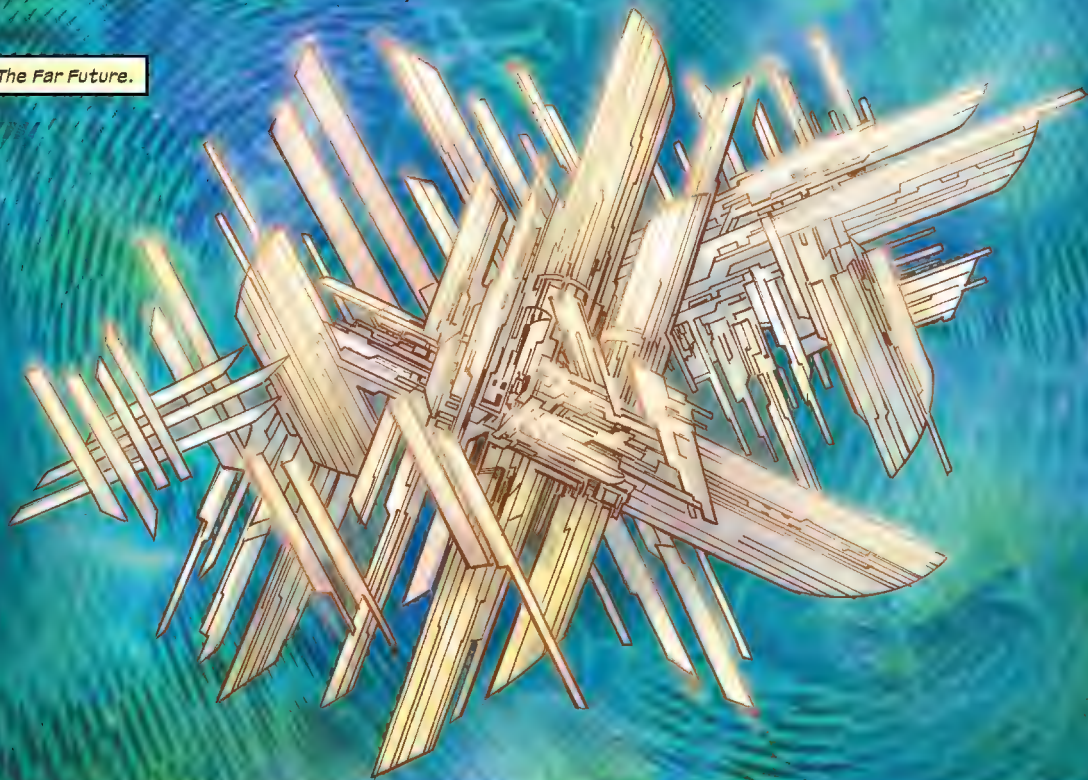
...I do
agree.

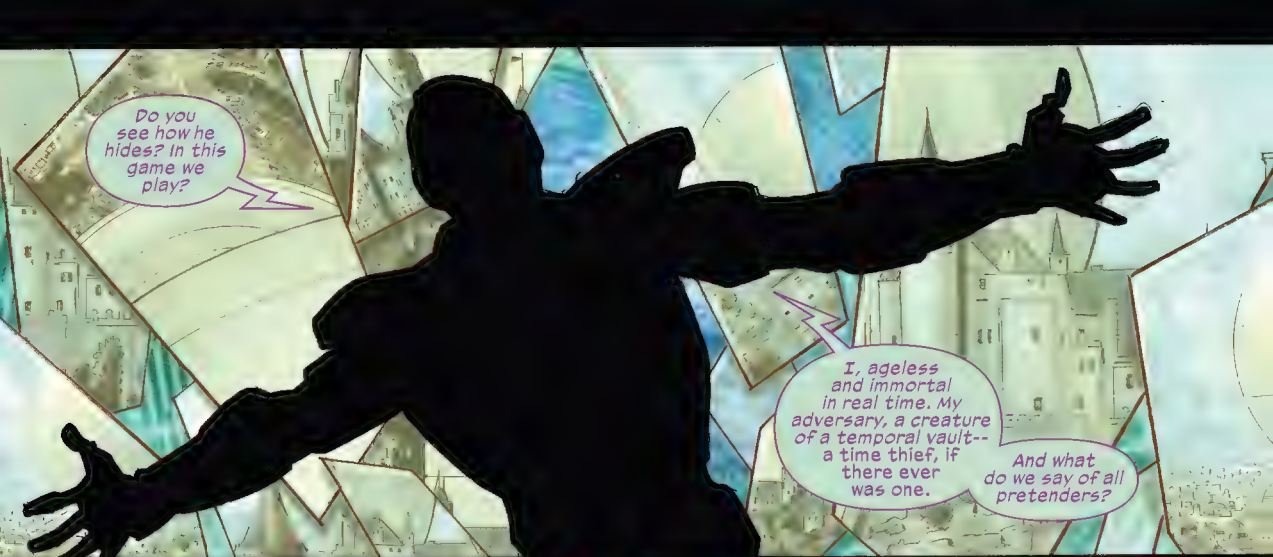




EPILOGUE:
"ALL TOMORROW'S ARMIES"

The Far Future.





Do you see how he hides? In this game we play?

I, ageless and immortal in real time. My adversary, a creature of a temporal vault-- a time thief, if there ever was one.

And what do we say of all pretenders?



Their time will come.



Tell me of my legions.



They are Infinite. They are Immortal.

They are ready to die.



This pleases me. It makes me eager.



I have heard your cries...I have heard you ask me...



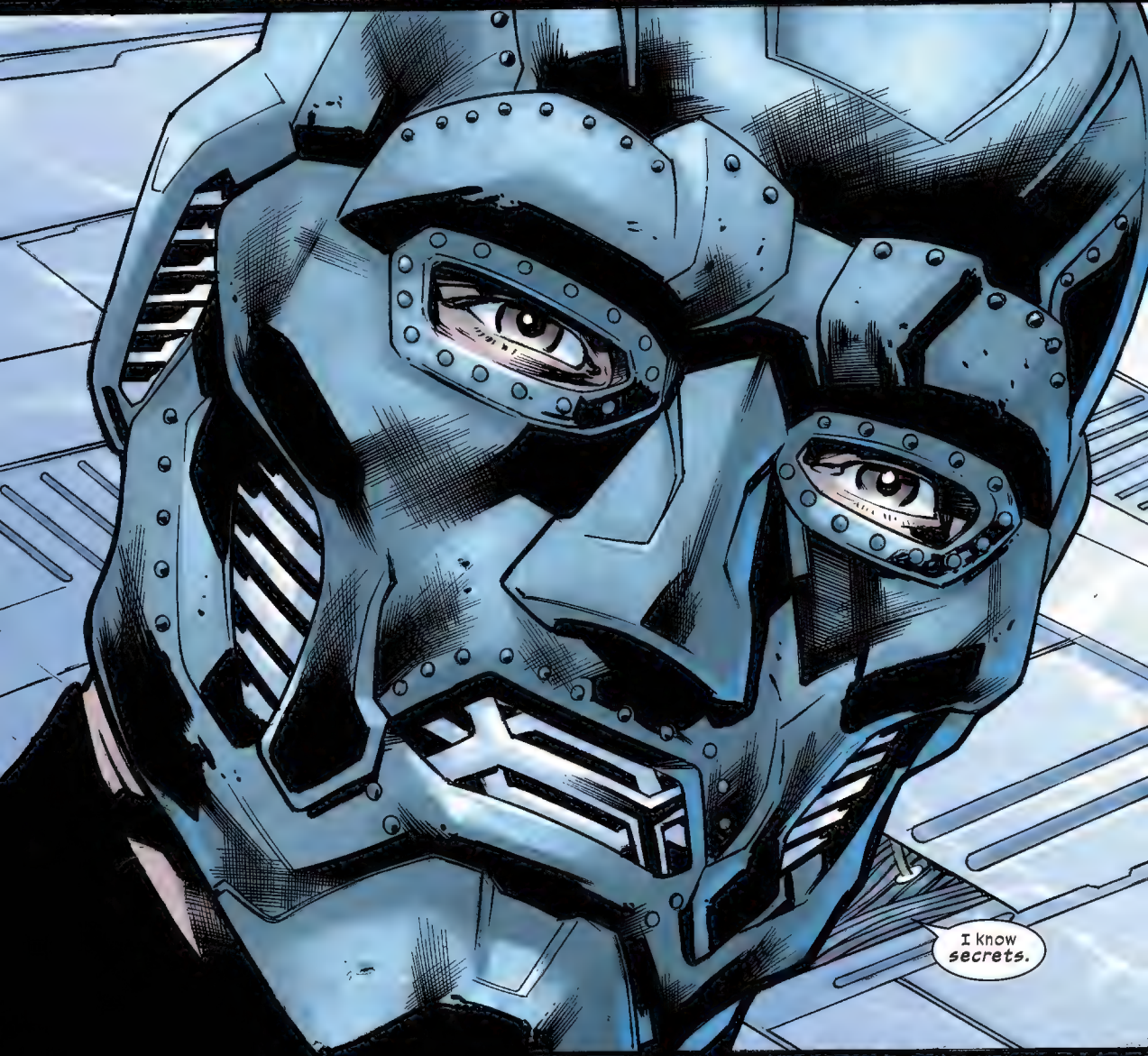
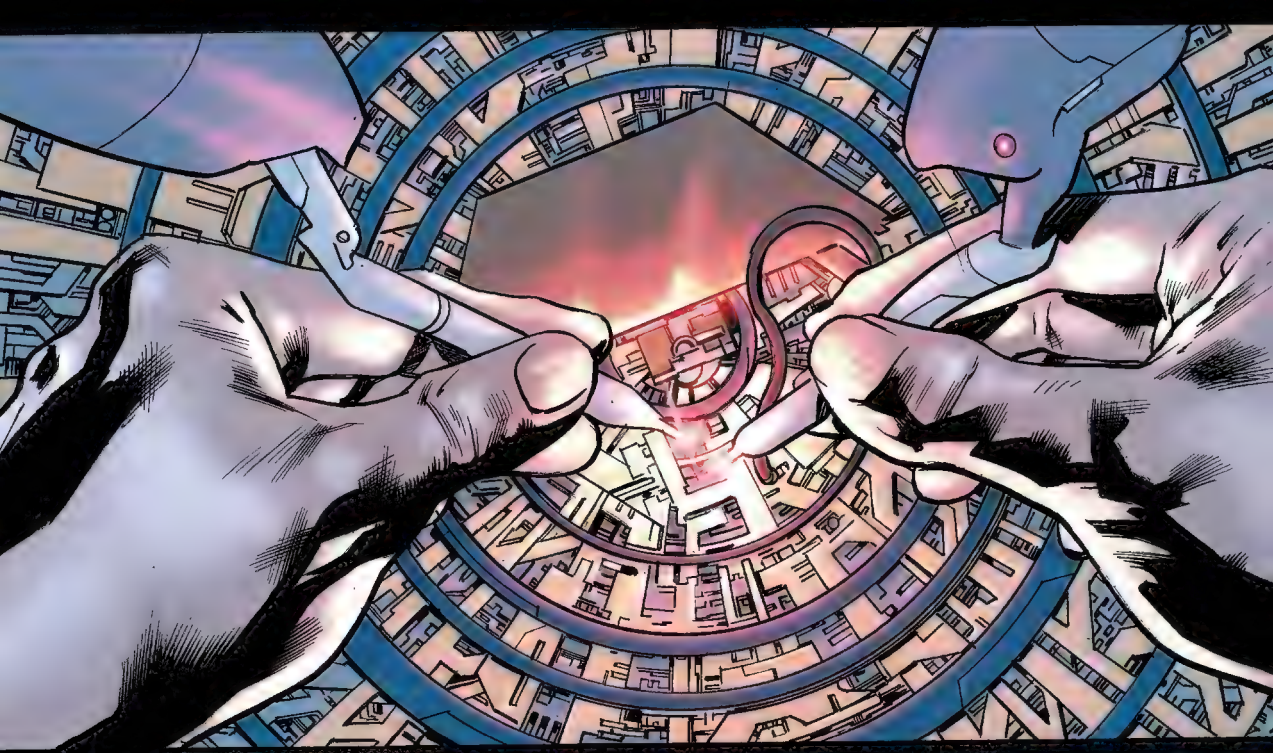
"Kang, is it time?"

And so
I tell you
truly...

The
time is
now.



TO BE CONCLUDED...



I know
secrets.



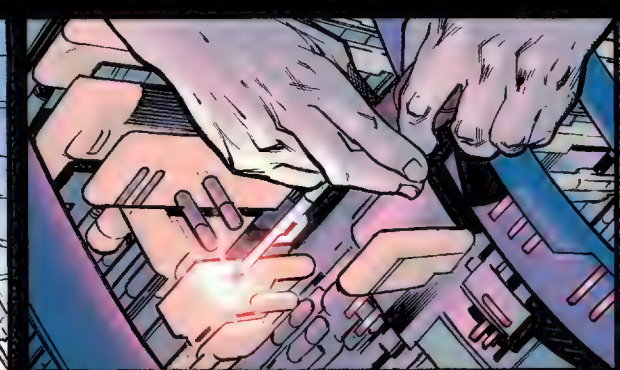
That's great.

Does one of them have to do with the secret sauce of polymers in the City? Because so far, this resin isn't playing nice with the copper filaments.



Reed, can you hand me the thing with the--

Thanks.



Okay. That's as good as it's going to get. It should hold. I hope it holds.

It better hold.



So... ...what kind of secrets?



Neither ones whispered, nor the murmurs of the discontent...

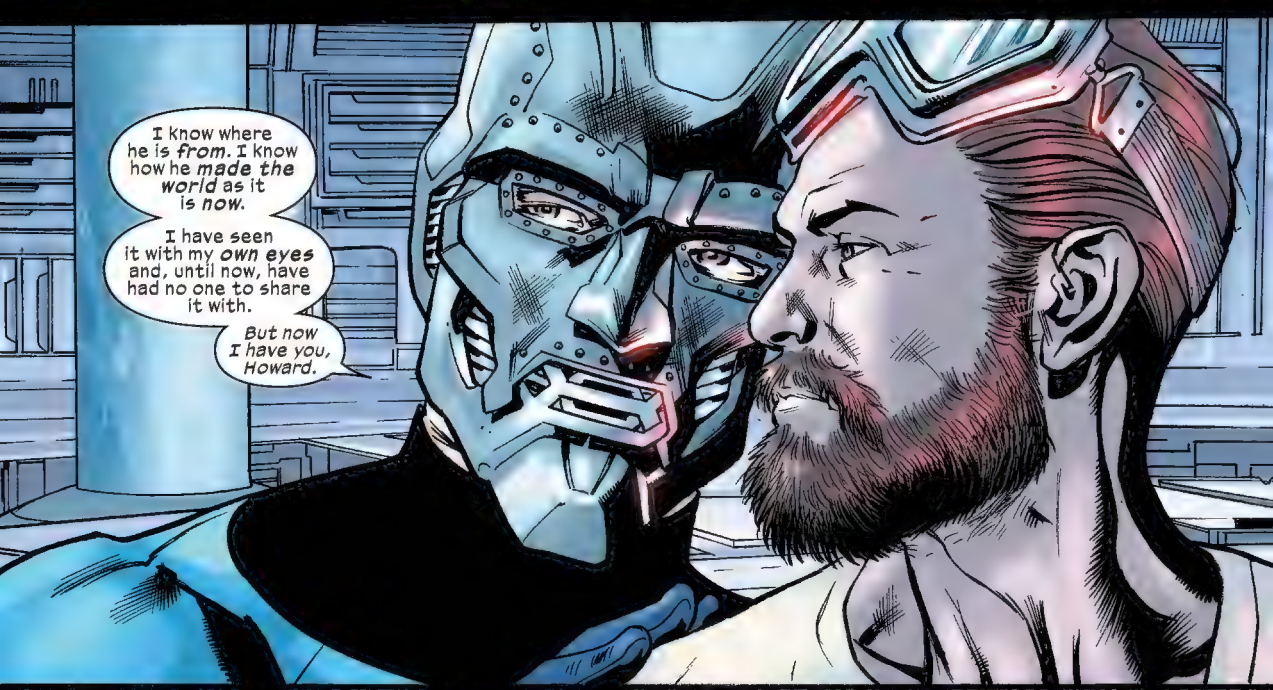
Not from conversations overheard, or rumors that take root and become truth.



No, these are the best of secrets...

The sins the great Maker holds deep in his heart.

... I'm listening.



I know where
he is *from*. I know
how he *made* the
world as it
is now.

I have seen
it with my *own* eyes
and, until now, have
had no one to share
it with.

But now
I have you,
Howard.

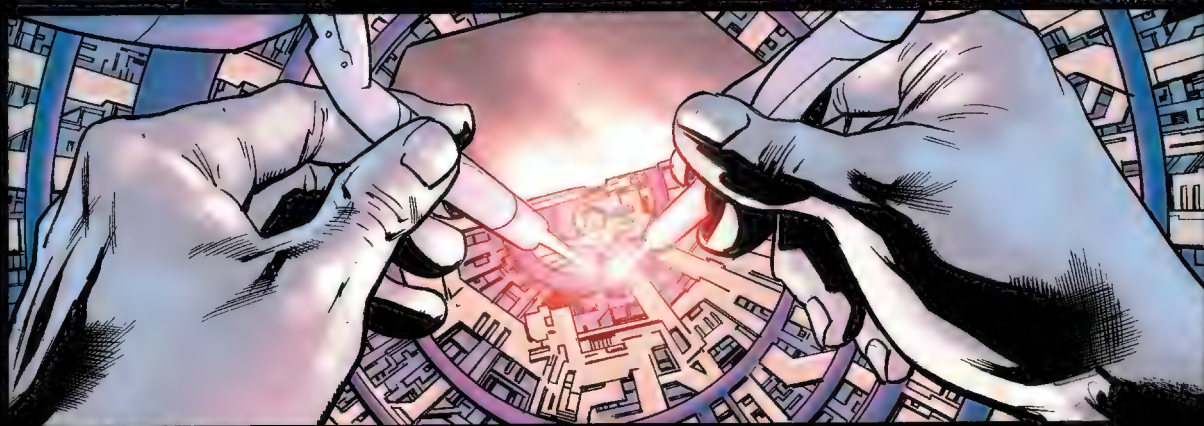


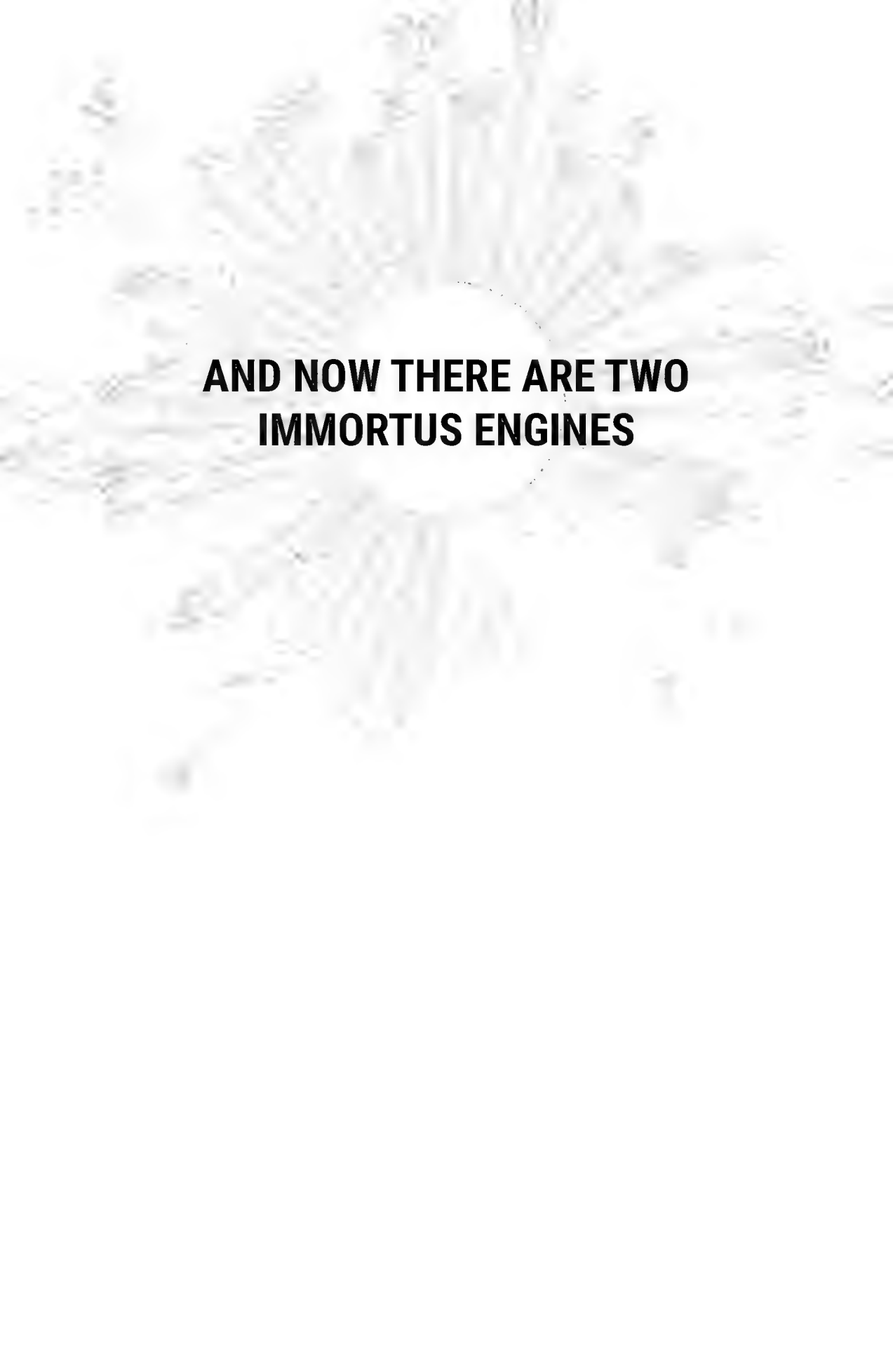
Do you
want me to
show you?



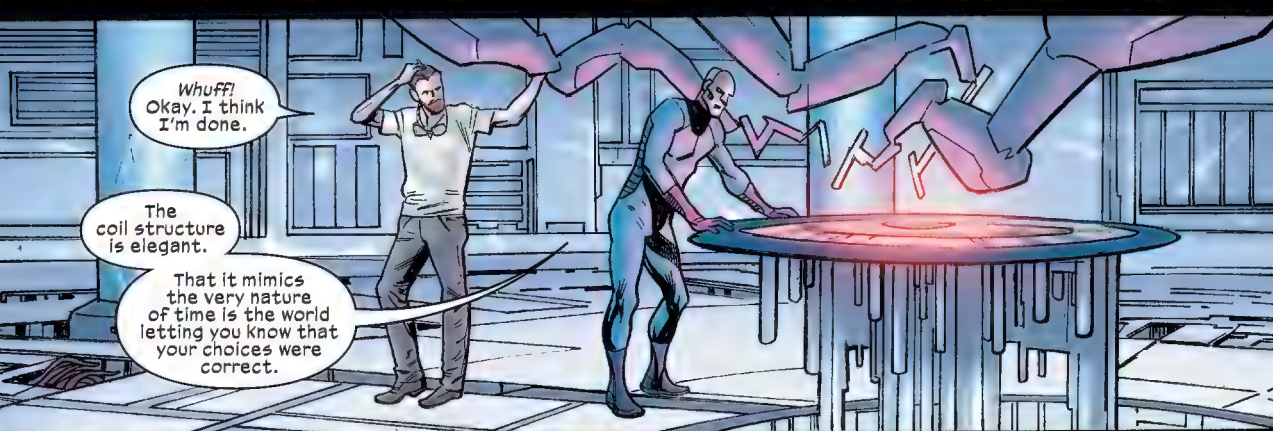
Absolutely.
But first things
first...

Because when
I finish this, we
just might have all the
time in the world for
the other.





**AND NOW THERE ARE TWO
IMMORTUS ENGINES**



Whuff!
Okay, I think
I'm done.

The
coil structure
is elegant.

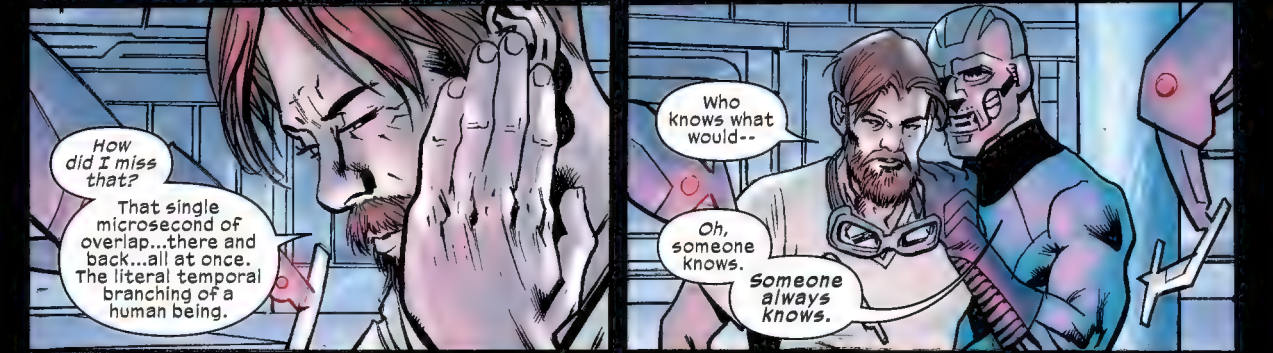
That it mimics
the very nature
of time is the world
letting you know that
your choices were
correct.



But you might want
to consider some
kind of feedback
mechanism...

Especially if your Immortus
Engine is built to go both
forward *and* backward
through time--one cannot
assume there will be a
pause between the
two states...

My
god...



How
did I miss
that?

That single
microsecond of
overlap...there and
back...all at once.
The literal temporal
branching of a
human being.

Who
knows what
would--

Oh,
someone
knows.

Someone
always
knows.



Damn. I
thought I was
finally...

I guess
I'm just
tired.

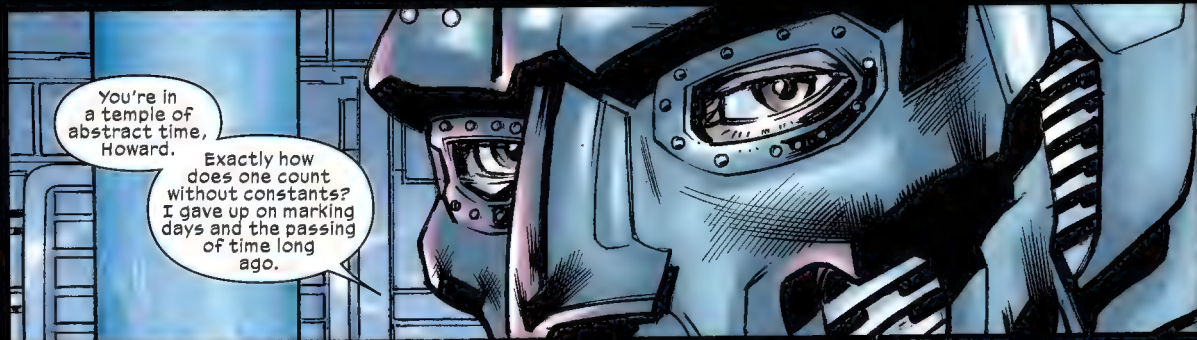
Read,
can I ask you
something?

Please
do.



How long
have we been
working on
this?

It feels like
days, but I don't
think I could put an
exact number on it
if I had to.



You're in a temple of abstract time, Howard.

Exactly how does one count without constants? I gave up on marking days and the passing of time long ago.



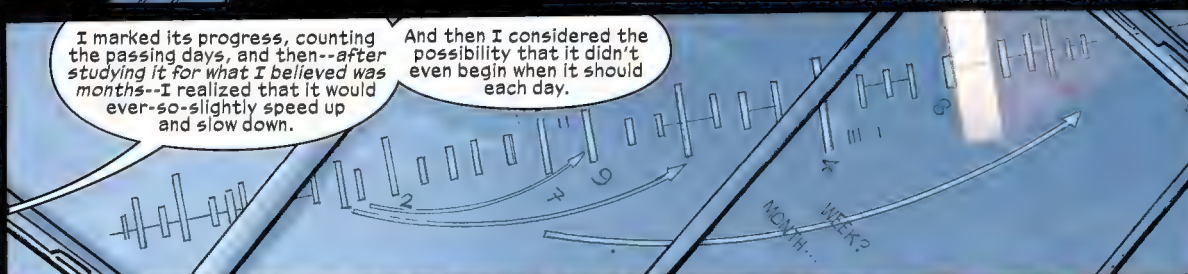
I'm sorry. It never occurred to me... I never asked...

How long have you been here? Trapped in this place?

See that trickle of light there on the wall?



It's the right temperature and color. So at first I thought it was the uncorrupted sun, slowly creeping by as time passed. Seconds, minutes, hours... longer.



I marked its progress, counting the passing days, and then--after studying it for what I believed was months--I realized that it would ever-so-slightly speed up and slow down.

And then I considered the possibility that it didn't even begin when it should each day.



When I was sure I was right, I told him--I said it out loud--knowing he was watching, listening...

I heard his laughter--and I watched as the light suddenly moved up and down the wall--artificially reflected, I suppose, by some mechanized mirror he controlled--as if nodding its head in agreement.

This was just the first of many games he has played with me.

Like the mask?



No. He's been very clear about that. This mask is no game at all.

It's who I really am.



This is a fully functional lab. Everything in here works--and while it appears I can come and go as I please, I can never truly escape.

Because I know that all of it is a contrivance to a greater, grander experiment--of which I am now sure I am the subject.

yes, he tortures me. yes, he hates me. But I do not know why.



I can help you escape.



Oh, Howard. Don't you understand?

you cannot run from who you are.



CHAPTER FOUR: “YESTERDAY, TODAY, TOMORROW”

ULTIMATE INVASION

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COLORIST: **ALEX SINCLAIR**
LETTERER: **VC's JOE CARAMAGNA**
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EDITOR: **WIL MOSS**
EXECUTIVE EDITOR: **TOM BREVOORT**
EDITOR IN CHIEF: **C.B. CEBULSKI**

The City.
One week later.

Ready?

The hologram
suit is *functional*. The
conduit terminator is
acceptable.

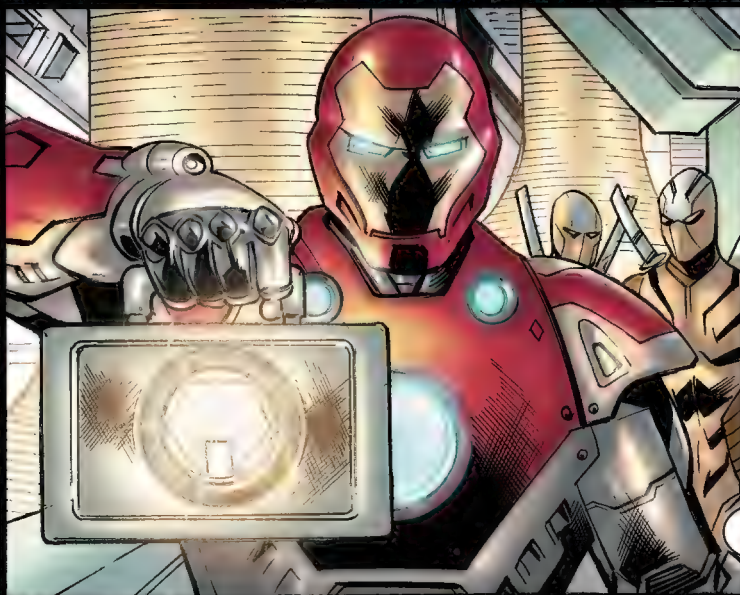
But my
psyche is...below
tolerable
thresholds.

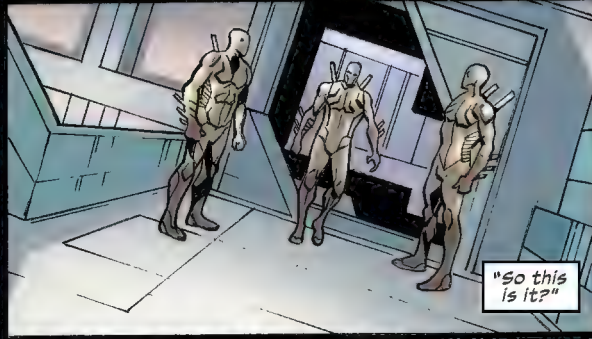
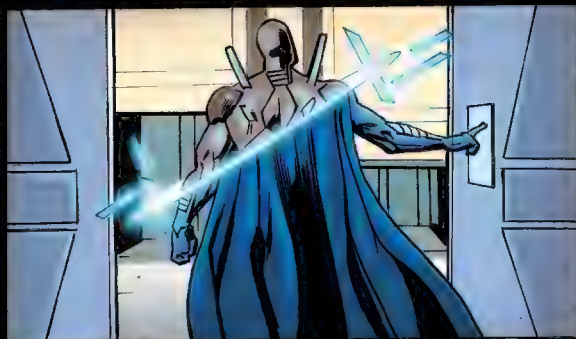
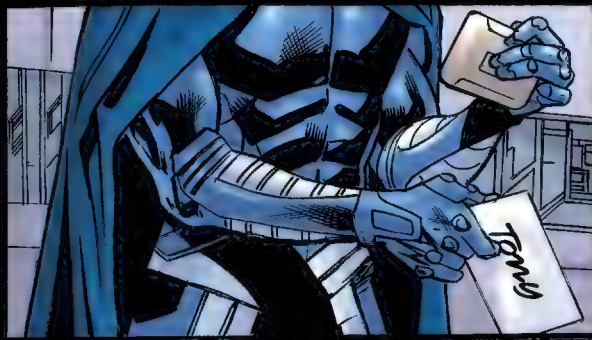
Ah, you're
worried this might
go wrong? That this is
goodbye or something
like that?

...
yes.

I
understand.
I feel the same
way. But it's
gonna be
okay...

I'll
see you on
the other
side.





"So this is it?"

You've built it. The machine that will enable me to do all the things I've already done.

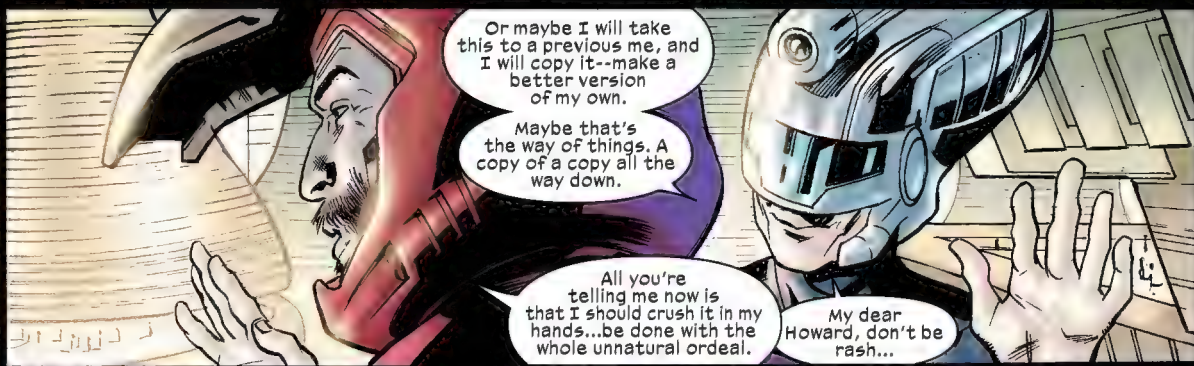
A way to make this world into the wonder that it now is?

No.

No?

"I simply copied it. Made one of my own--a better version, if I do say so myself."

"The other was made by someone else's hands. Yours, if I had to guess. You just forgot what you had done. Some missing memory of a more whole Maker."



Or maybe I will take this to a previous me, and I will copy it--make a better version of my own.

Maybe that's the way of things. A copy of a copy all the way down.

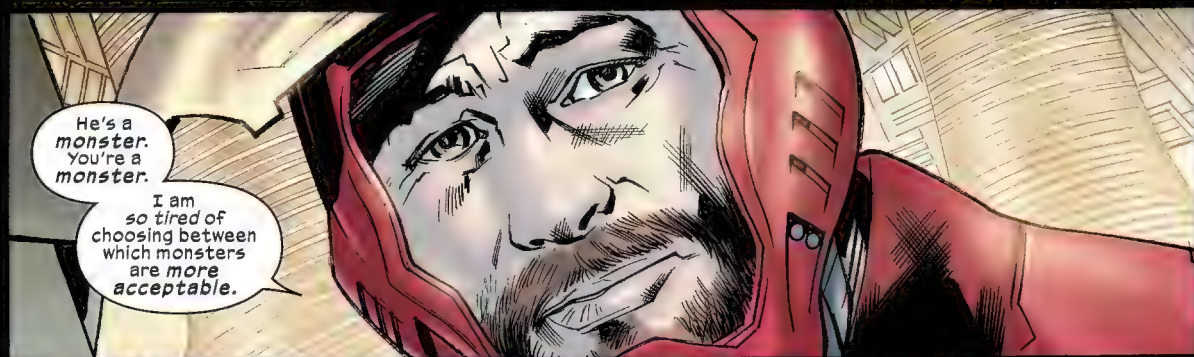
All you're telling me now is that I should crush it in my hands...be done with the whole unnatural ordeal.

My dear Howard, don't be rash...



"If I have done anything, surely I have shown you that, before all other things, we have a monster from the future who we have to kill."

Power conduit terminator armed.



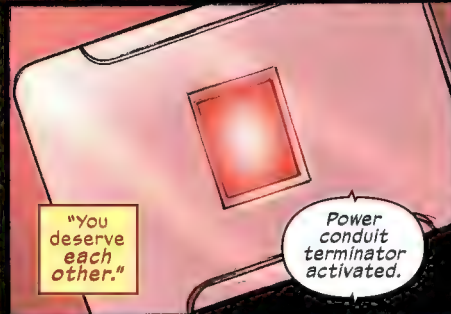
He's a monster. You're a monster.

I am so tired of choosing between which monsters are more acceptable.



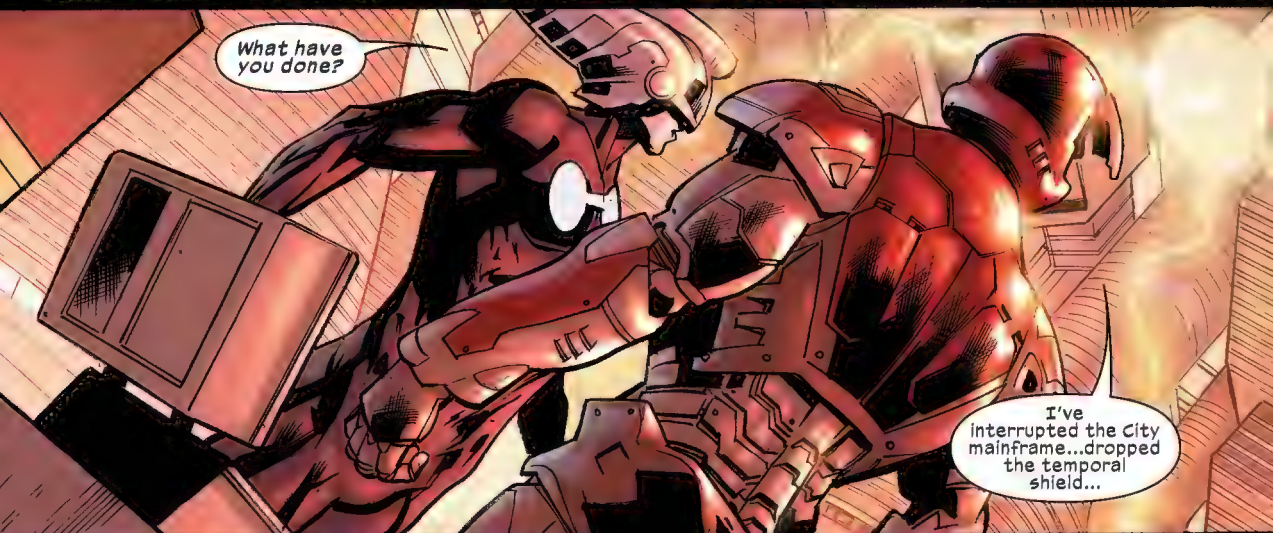
Power conduit terminator linked. Remote access granted.

"you don't deserve me."



"you deserve each other."

Power conduit terminator activated.

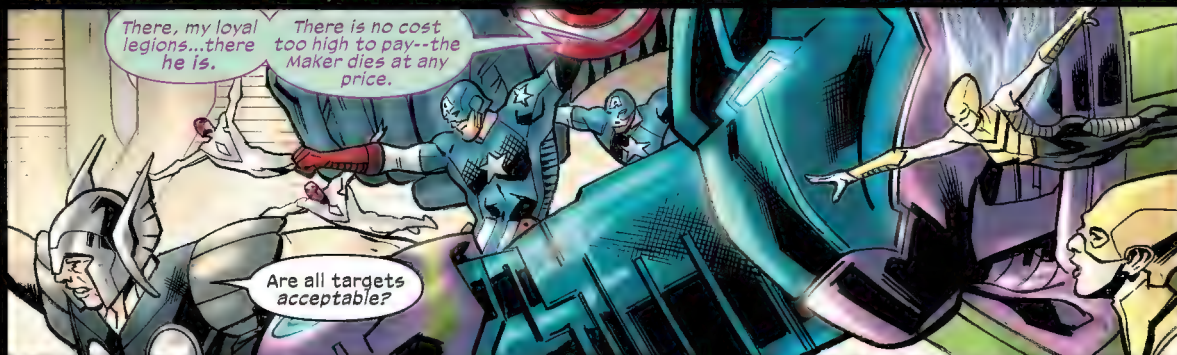


What have you done?

I've interrupted the city mainframe...dropped the temporal shield...



"I've opened the door to let the wolves in."



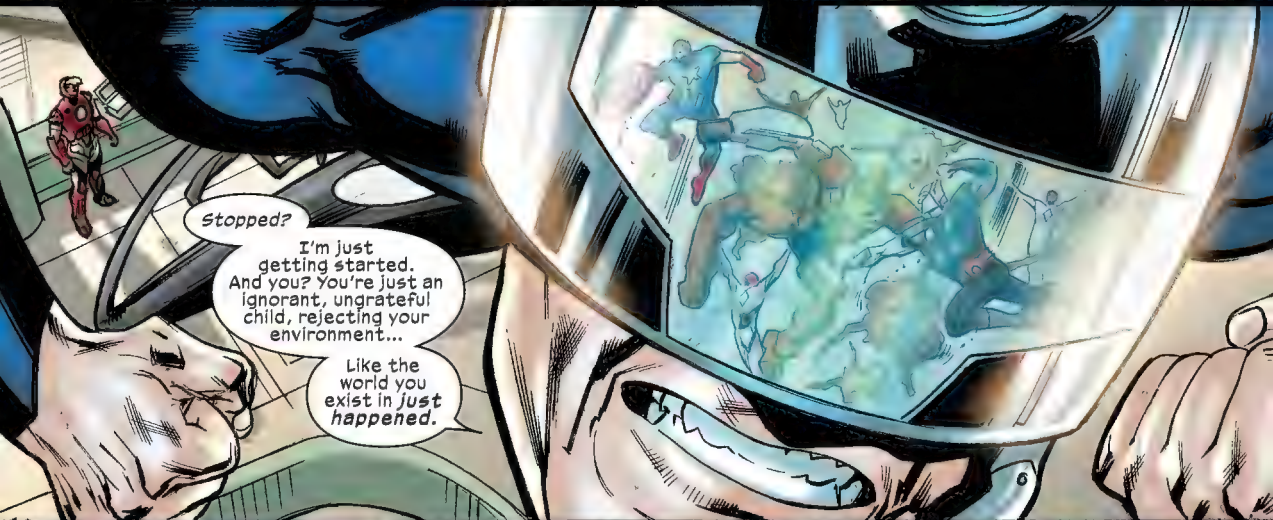




I can see those wheels spinning, Mr. Stark.

You've decided to play your own game, haven't you?

This isn't a game! You need to be stopped!



Stopped?

I'm just getting started. And you? You're just an ignorant, ungrateful child, rejecting your environment...

Like the world you exist in just happened.



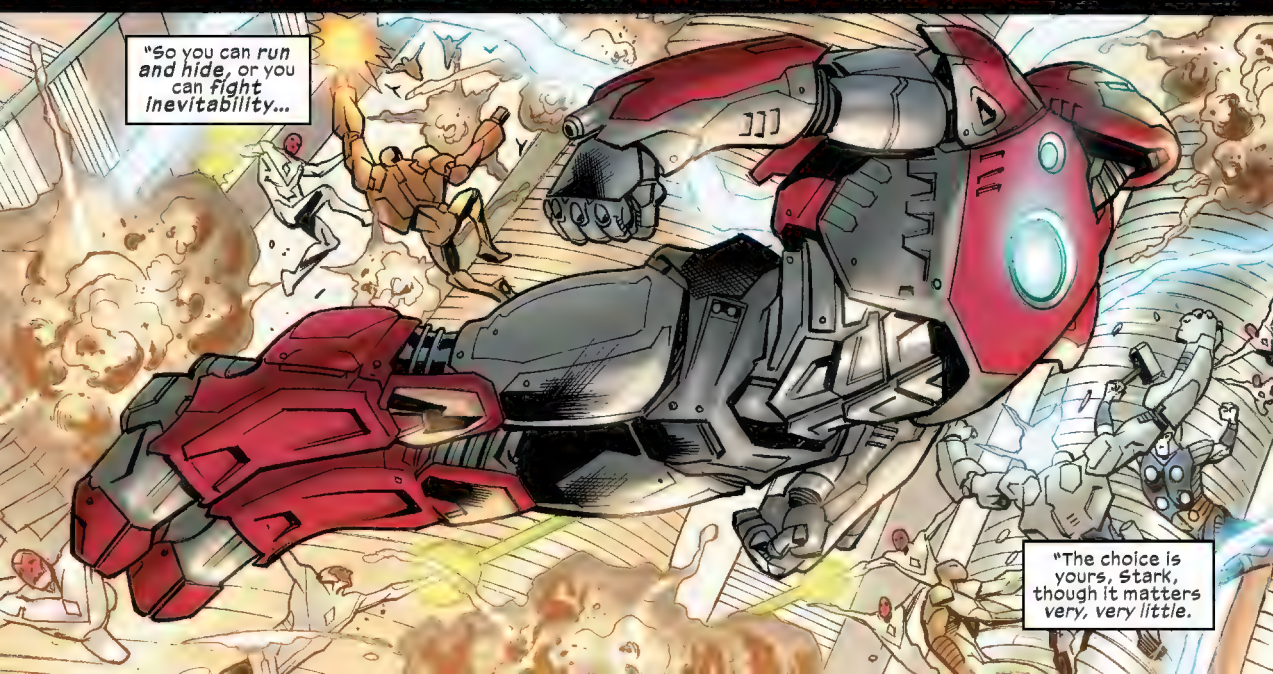
"Well, it didn't just happen..."

"I happened."



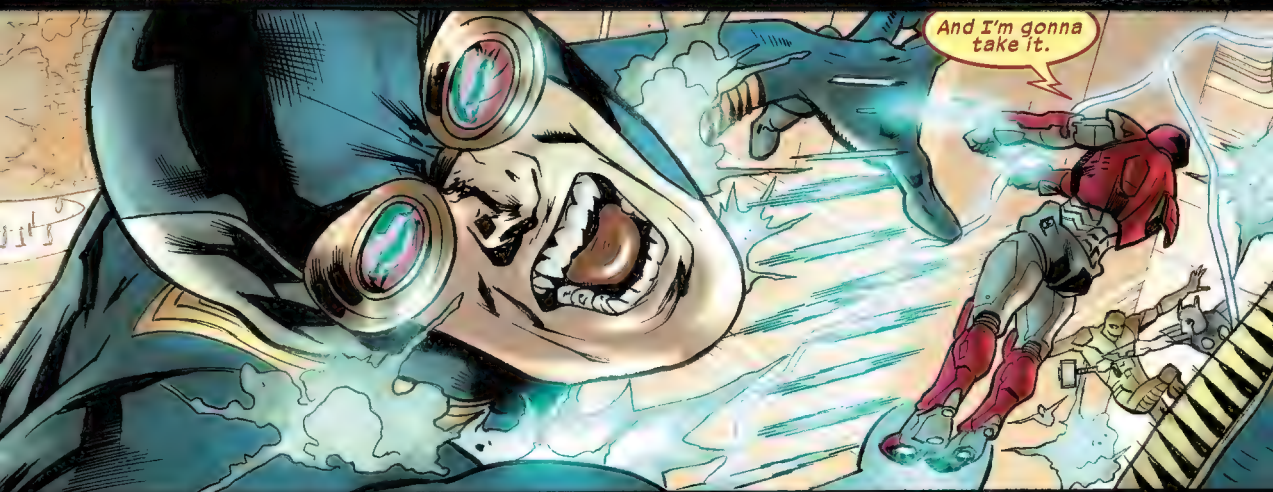
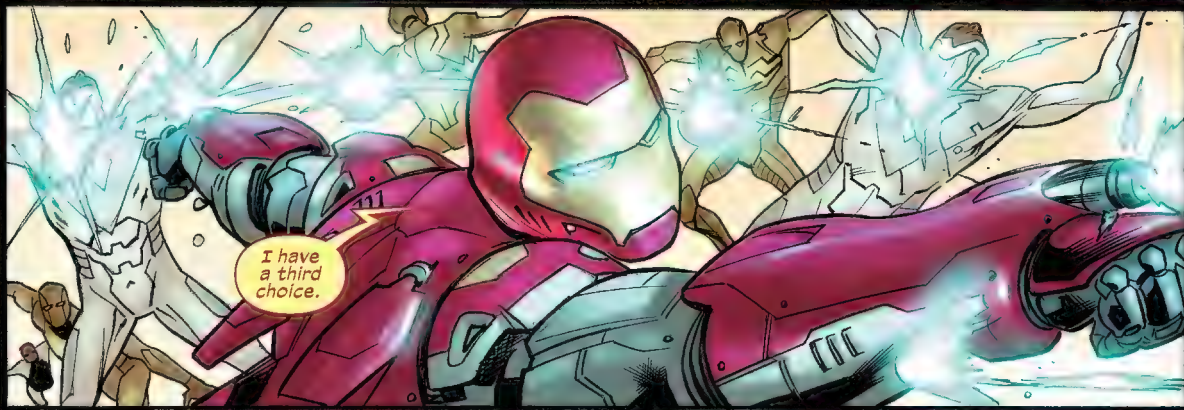
"And these people are here to erase all my mighty works."

"Including you."



"So you can run and hide, or you can fight inevitability..."

"The choice is yours, Stark, though it matters very, very little."





stop him!
stop--
HURKK!

Pawns!
Pointless creatures!
I understand why you do
what you do. What else
could anyone expect from
something designed
at creation
to die.

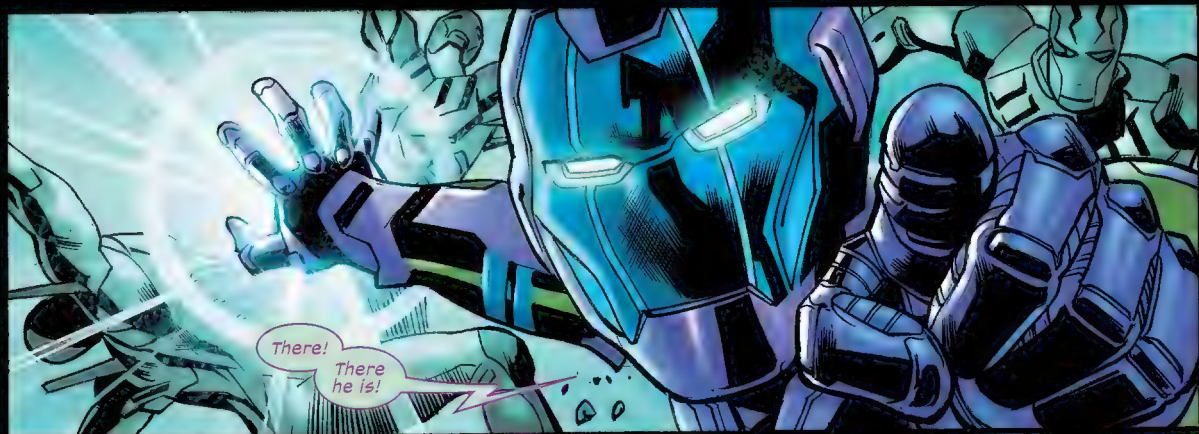
But you
are delaying
what has to
happen.



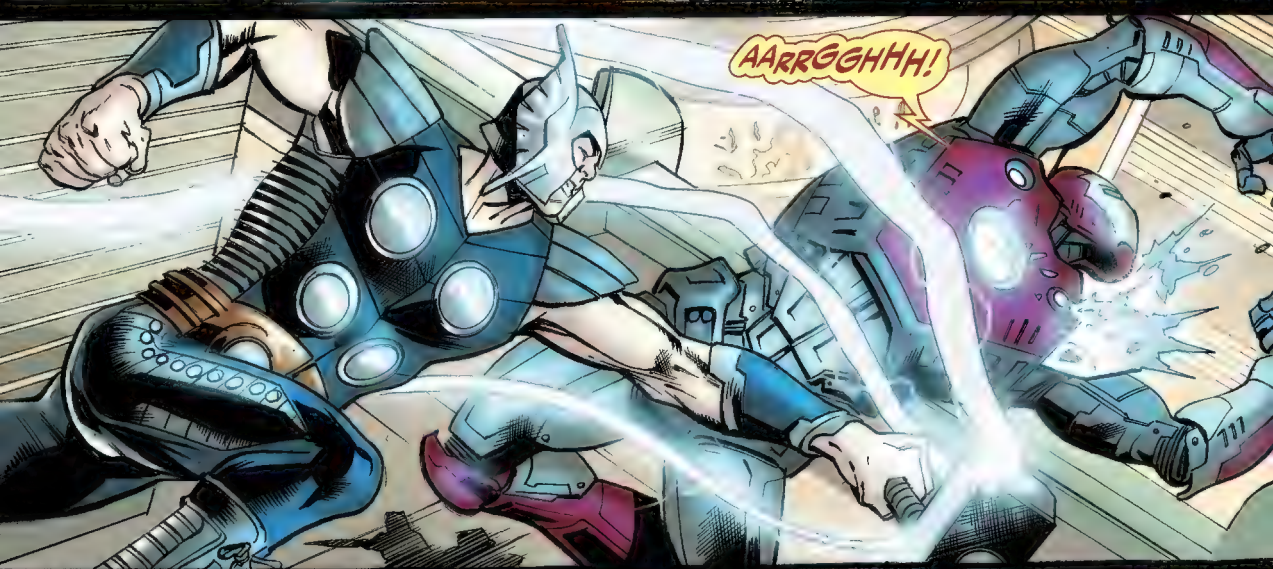
Stop all this
obstruction--
serve your real
purpose...

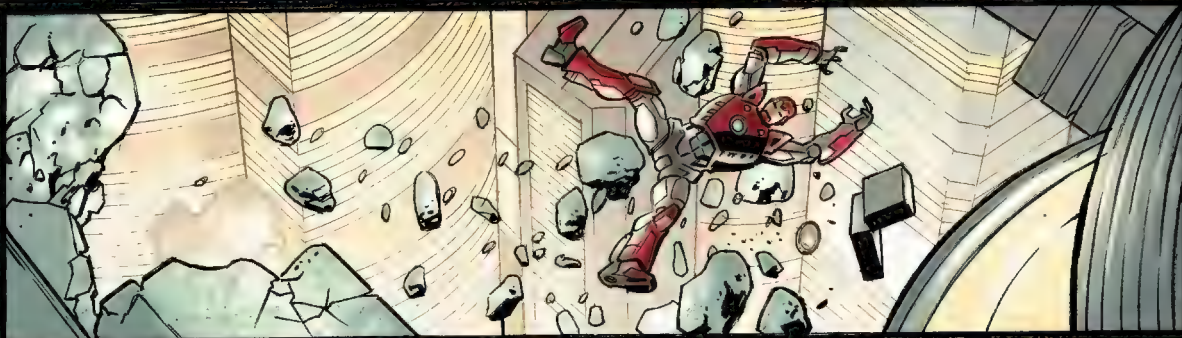


AND
BRING ME
KANG!

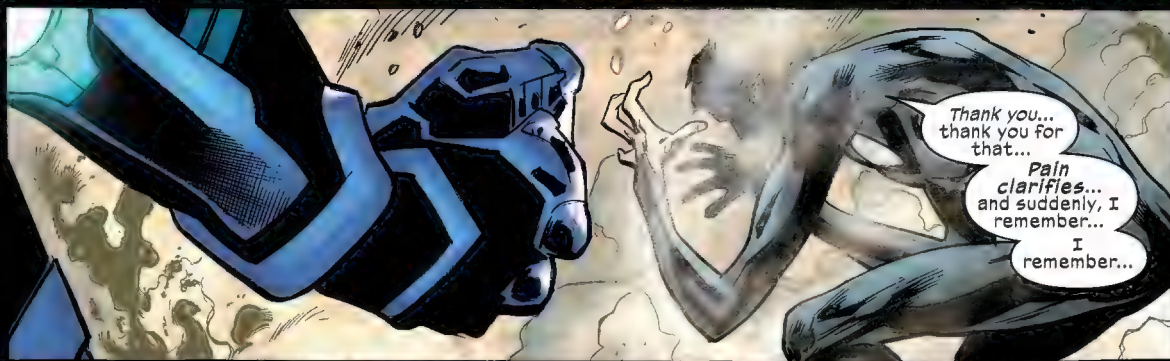








"57 seconds..."

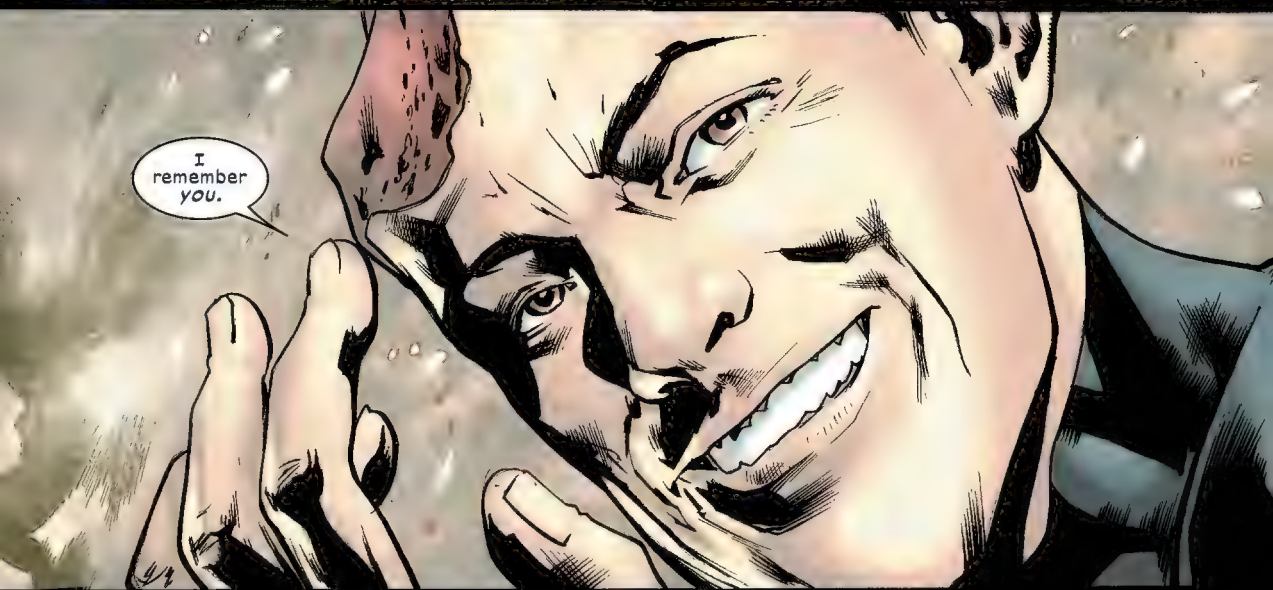


Thank you...
thank you for
that...

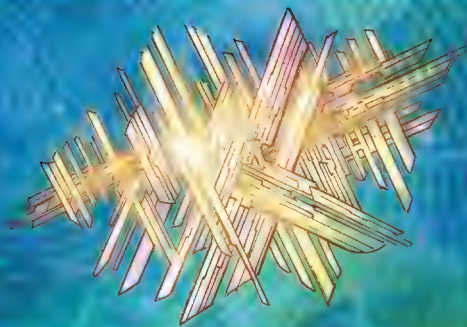
*Pain
clarifies...
and suddenly, I
remember...*

I
remember...

I
remember
you.



The Far Future.



Then.

I
had to
know.

Hmmmm?



I have built
my kingdom.
I have remade my
world. And I had to
know if it would
endure...

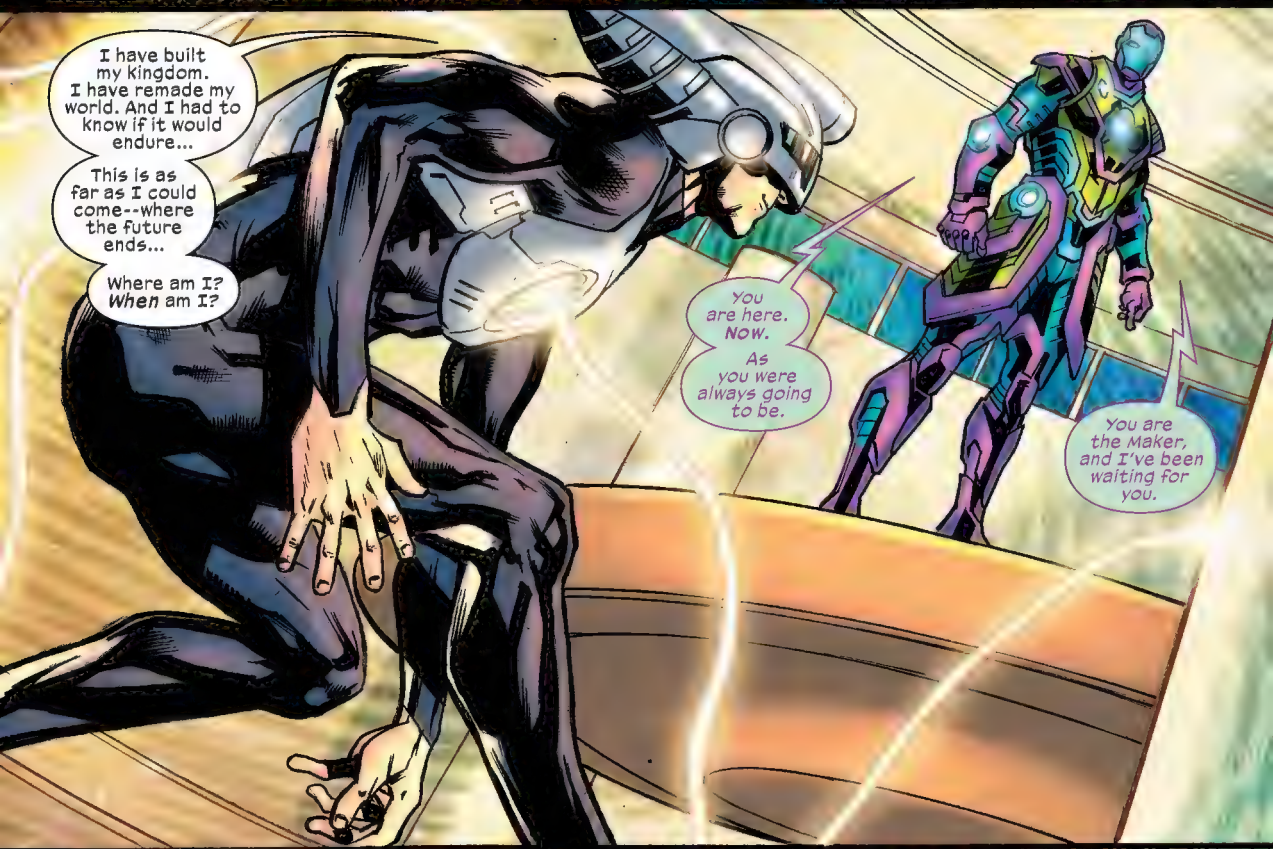
This is as
far as I could
come--where
the future
ends...

Where am I?
When am I?

You
are here.
Now.

As
you were
always going
to be.

You are
the Maker,
and I've been
waiting for
you.



For
revenge?

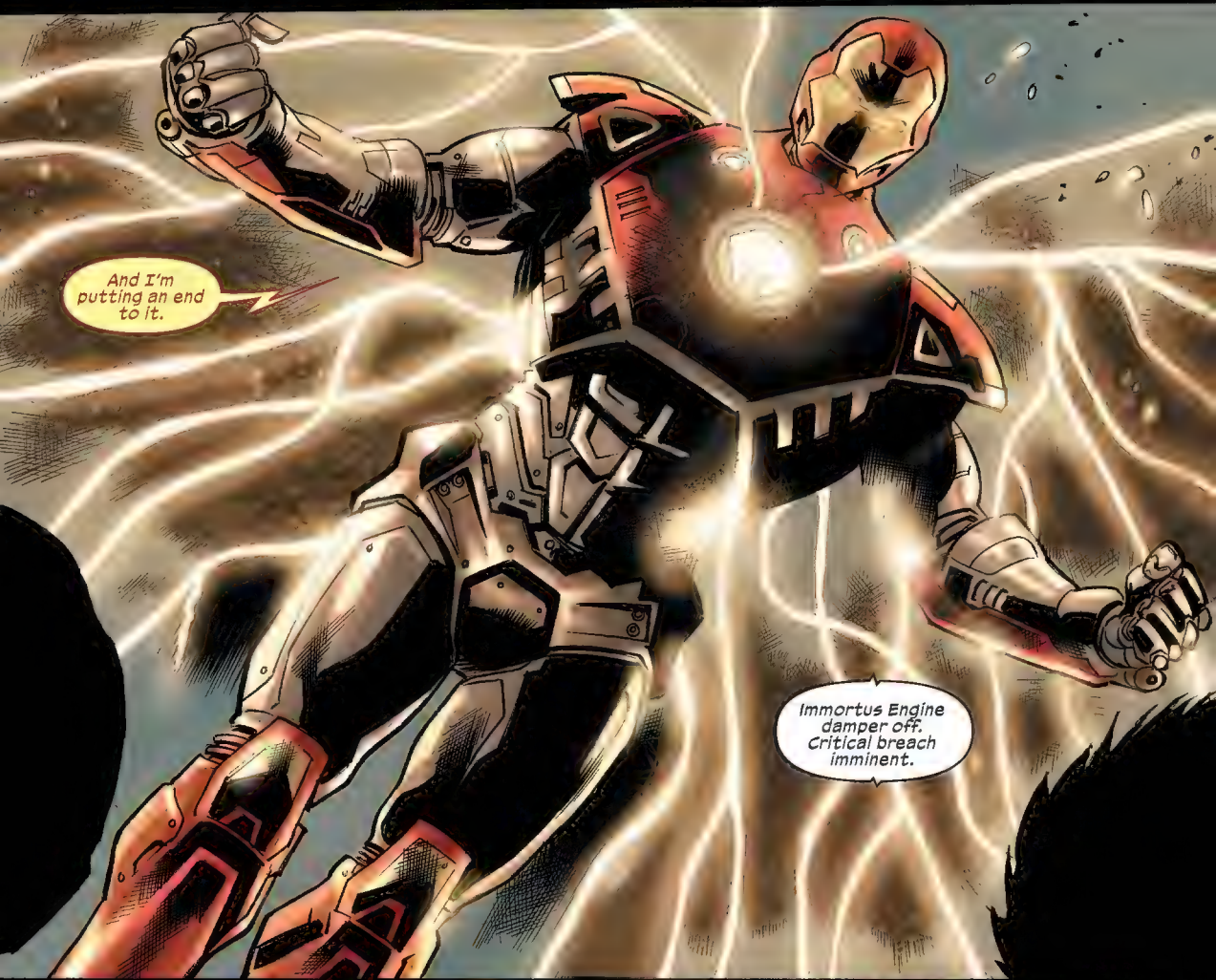
For
reverence?

Who
am I to
you?

You
are my
maker...







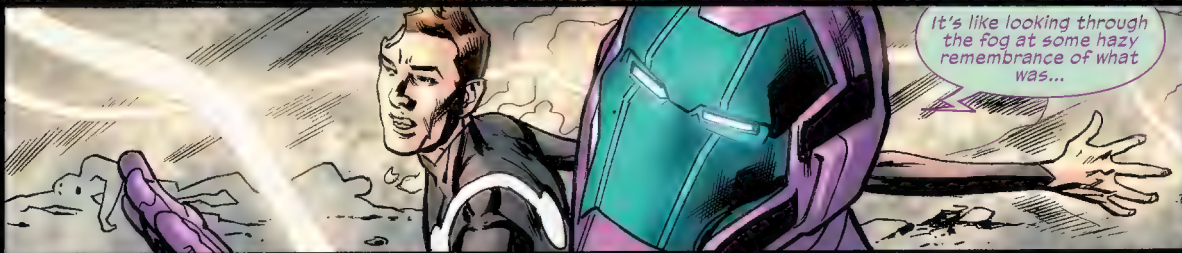
And I'm putting an end to it.

Immortus Engine
damper off.
Critical breach
imminent.

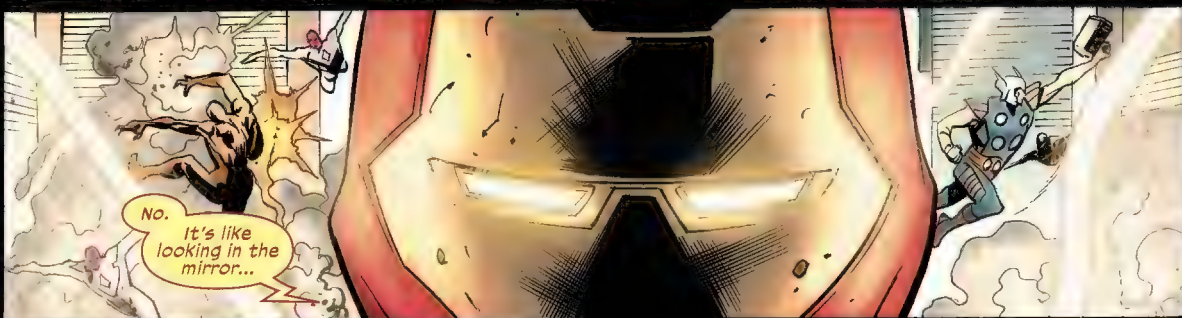


What are you doing,
Stark?

Isn't it obvious? He's
solving two problems at
once. Just look at him.
Look at how righteous
he is...



It's like looking through
the fog at some hazy
remembrance of what
was...



No.
It's like
looking in the
mirror...



...and
hating what
you see.

The Maker's Castle.
Latveria.



I
promised...

So
why do I
hesitate?

Is it
because I have
to consider this
might be another
prison for me?

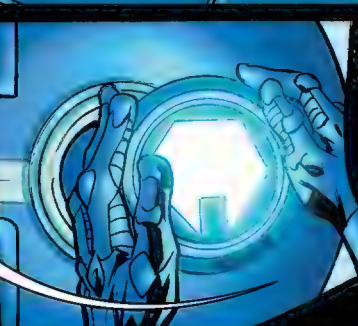


One where
the walls are made
of obligation and not
punishment.

And
all-consuming in
a way that my
previous cell never
could be.

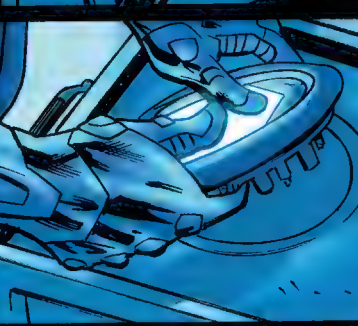


Something
broken...for
someone
broken...

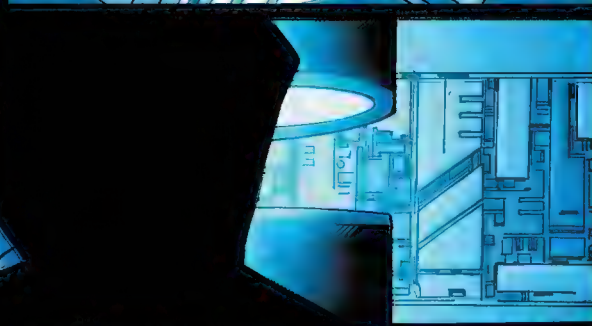


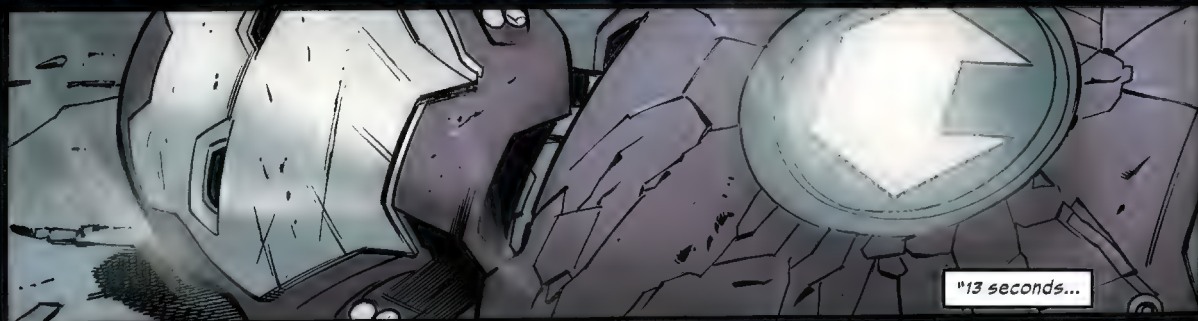
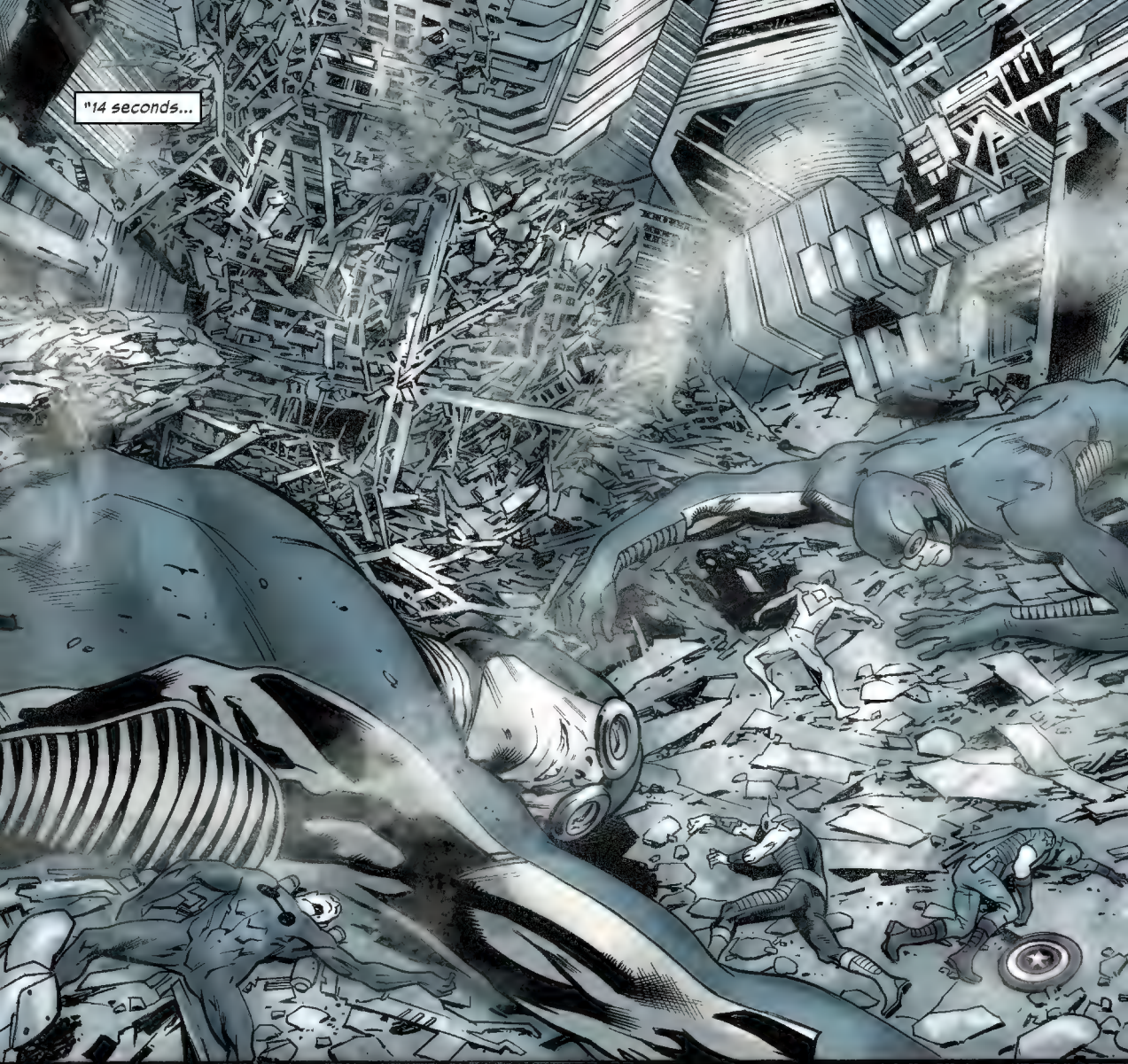
Who
can say?

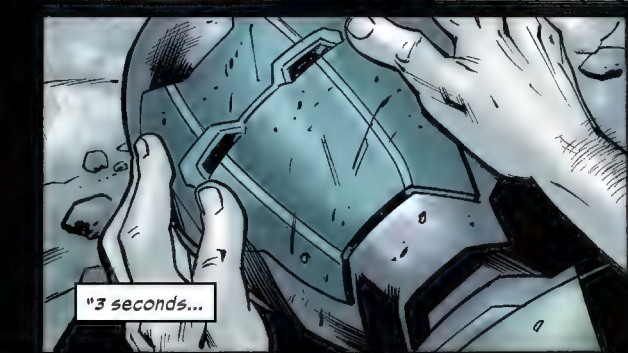
The
choice I leave
to better
angels.

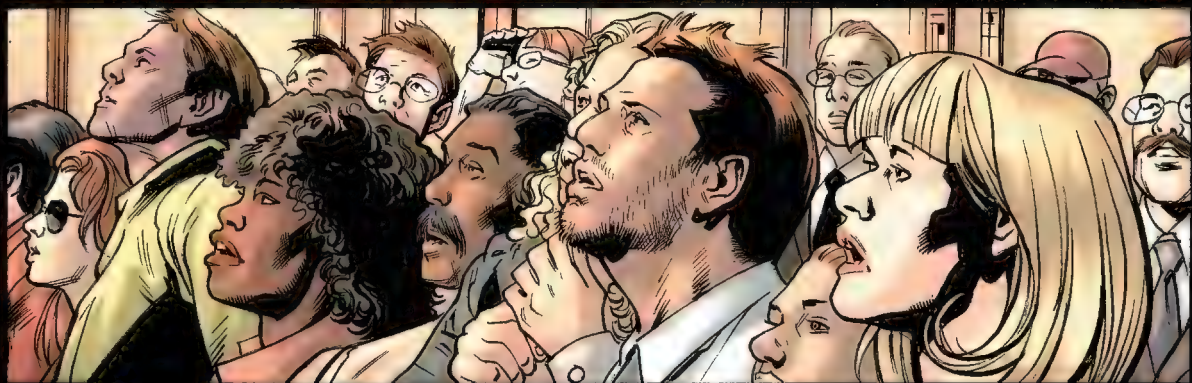


"15 seconds..."

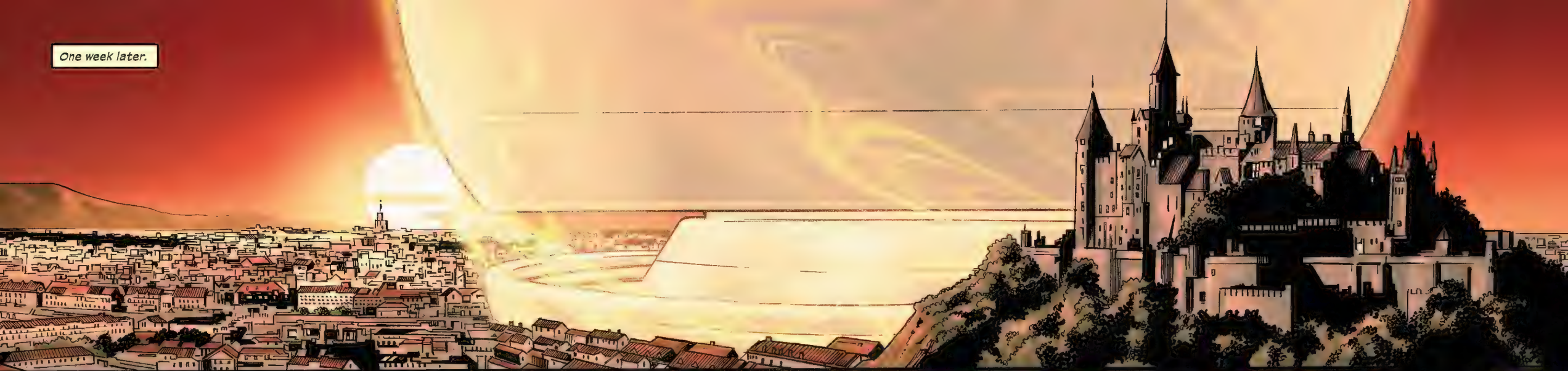








One week later.



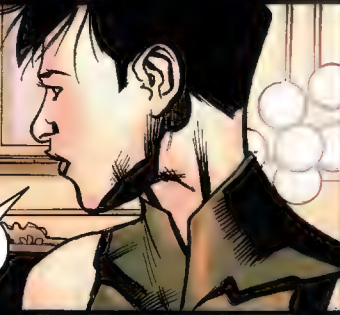
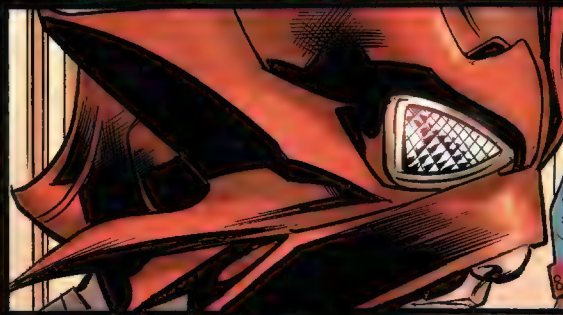
Just look at it.



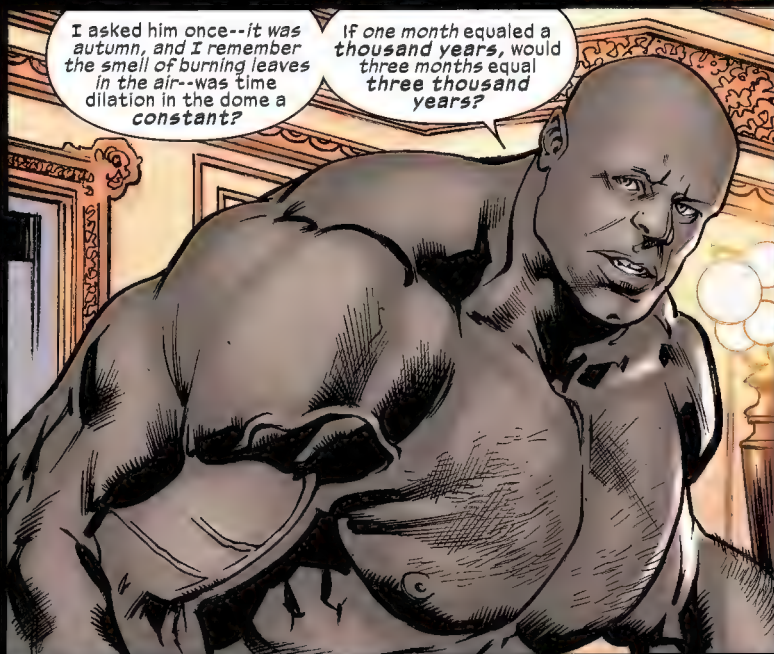
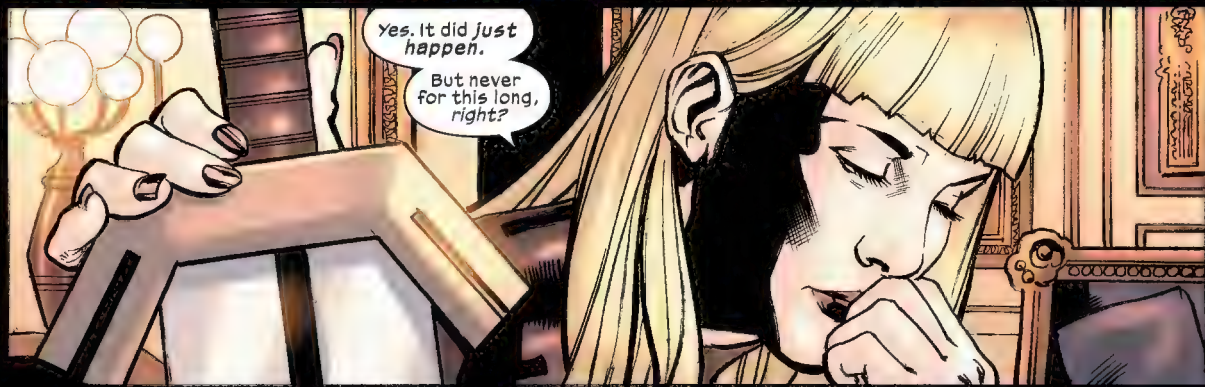
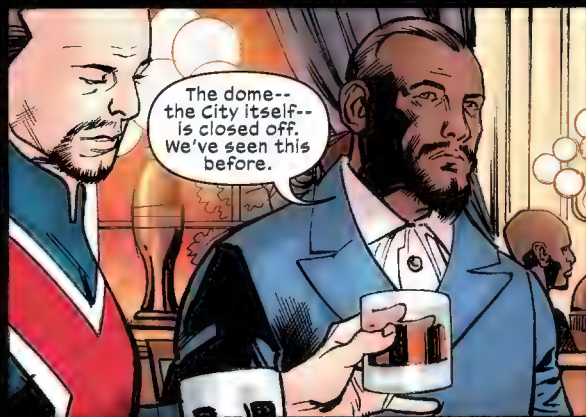
Like some kind of outrageous ticking bomb.

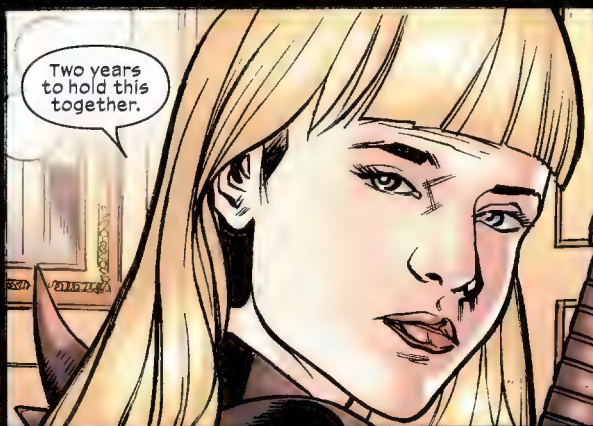
It's a fitting legacy for our dear, disappeared leader, no? Some elaborate game that ends with all of us dead.

What do we know exactly?



Not enough.







And you shouldn't pretend like it's not a valid choice.

After all, there's no guarantee that whatever comes out of that thing when it opens remotely resembles you or me.



Or shares our hopes and desires.

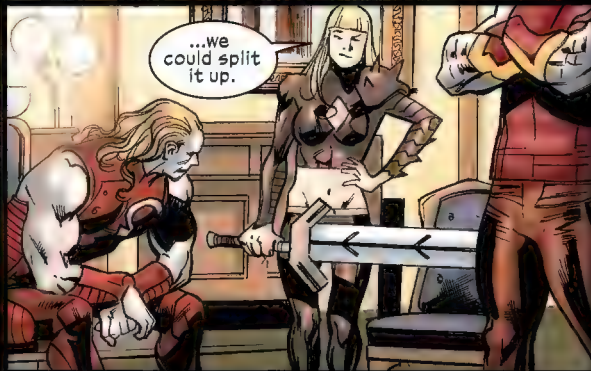
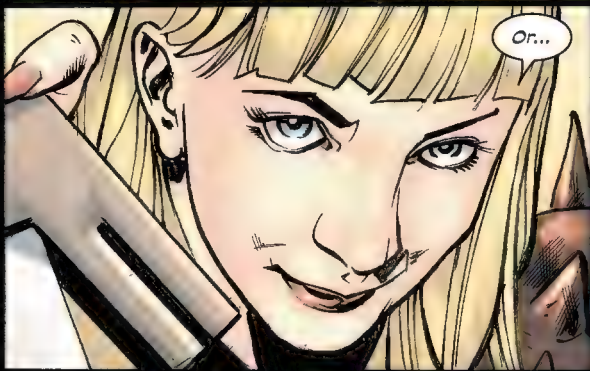


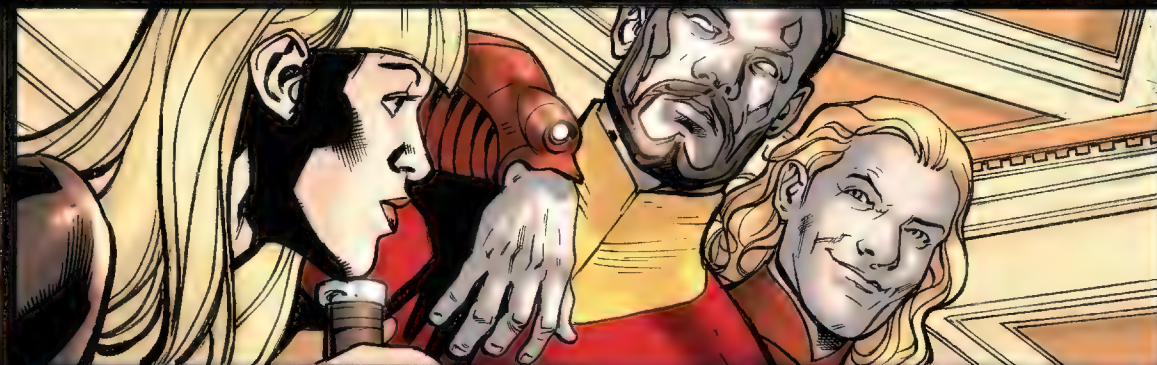
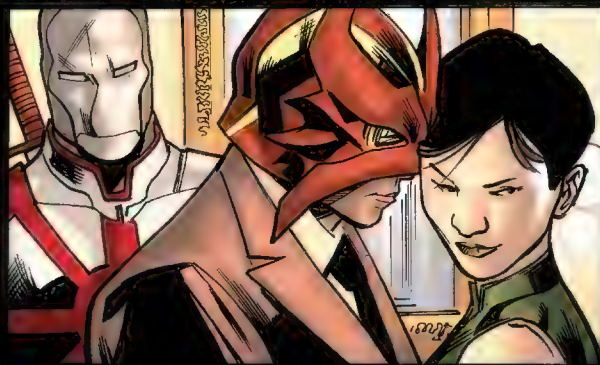
Or thinks of us as equal-- as human-- at all.



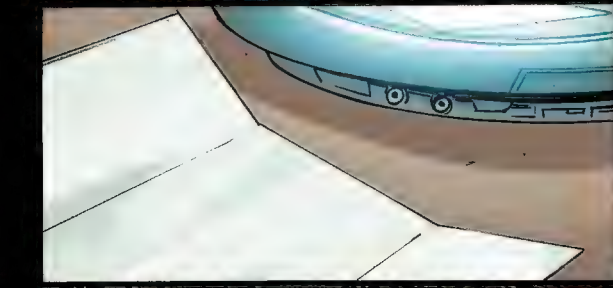
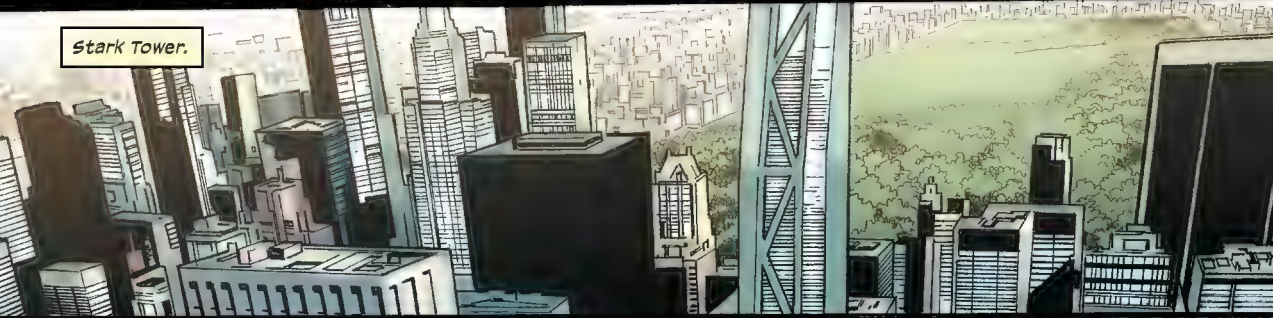
Well, this is clearly a subject that requires a bit more thought. Perhaps we should tackle a more *short-term* problem:

What do we do about *America* and their *Union*?





Stark Tower.



He gave
this to
you?



The world
was ending,
Anthony. The
future colliding
with the
now.

Temporal
Kings were being
overthrown, and
multiversal evils
were being
undone...

But bringing
these things to
you was my **most**
important
task.



This machine--
the broken Immortus
Engine, which you and I
have already repaired--the
secret files you showed
me, and this...

A **letter**
from my
father.

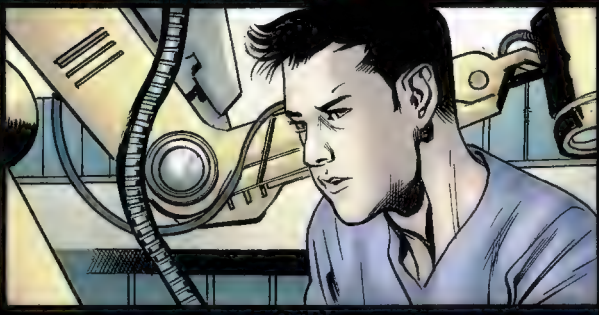


While I have some notion of what *could* be done with these things--the potential of them...

...he said you would know what *should* be done.



And so the choice should be yours.



...
Is my father dead?

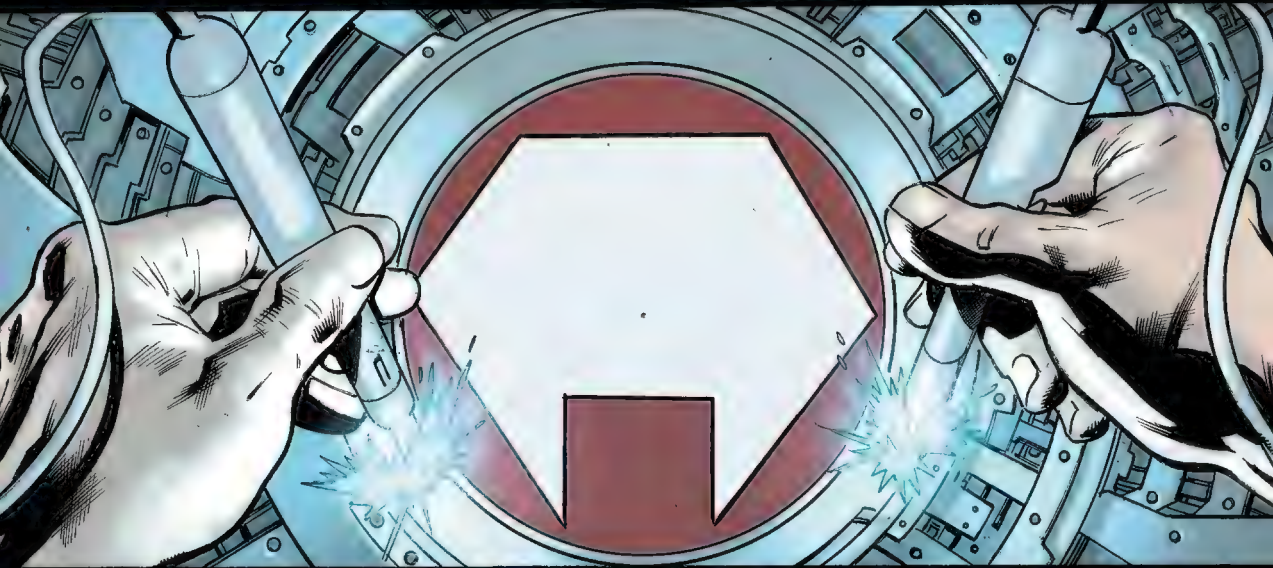


Variables, probabilities, the very character of the man fighting for his life...

I'm sorry, but I have no way to definitively answer that question.



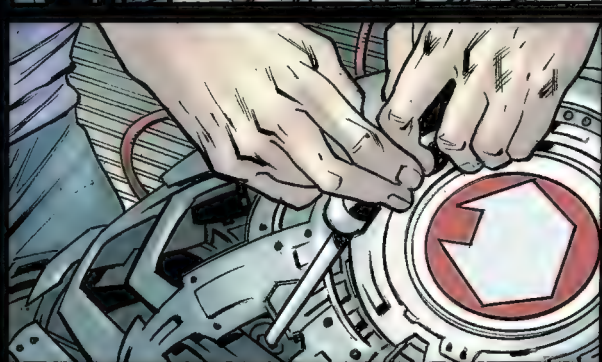
I'm gonna need a suit.



It'll need to handle temporal shear and need some kind of integrated navigational control.



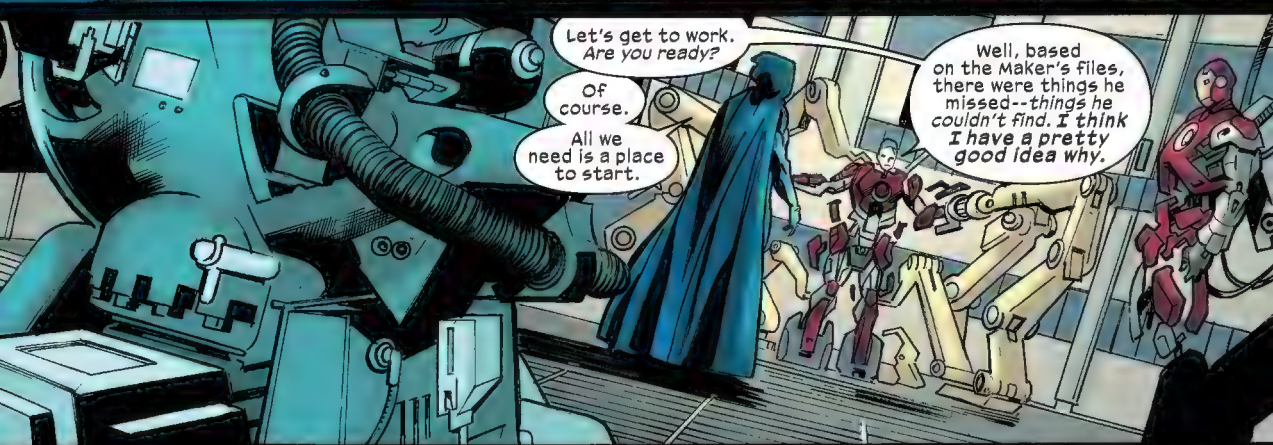
And a weapon...it should also be a weapon.



yeah. Without a doubt.



Okay.
That
should do
it...

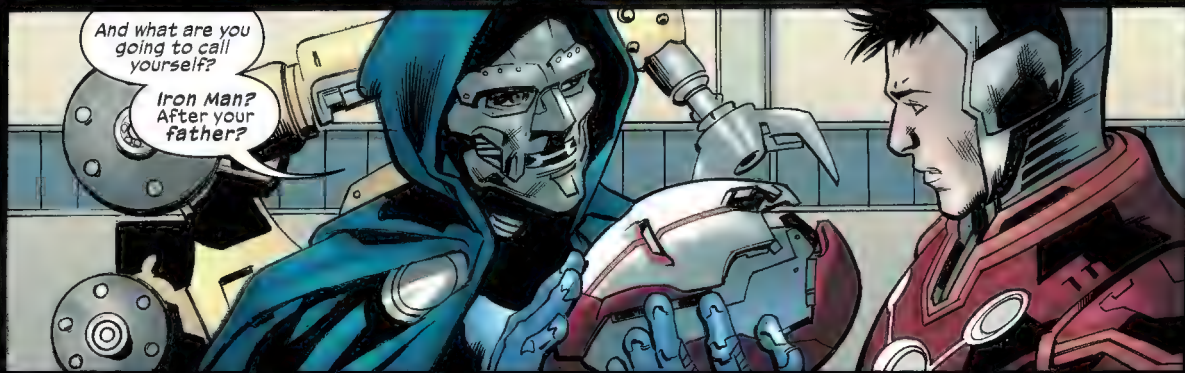


Let's get to work.
Are you ready?

Of
course.

All we
need is a place
to start.

Well, based
on the Maker's files,
there were things he
missed--things he
couldn't find. I think
I have a pretty
good idea why.



And what are you
going to call
yourself?

Iron Man?
After your
father?



No.
He's Iron
Man.



For now,
I'll just be
Iron Lad.

At least
until I've
earned a better
name.



EPILOGUE: "WIN"

The past.

My dearest
Anthony,

I am so tired
of this world.

I am so tired
of the people
in it.

Of what they
accept...

And of what
they have
become.

But I know the fault was mine.
Maybe more than most because
of my gifts and the means that
came with them.

I was so wrapped up in the good
things I was doing--the work and the
bounty that work provided us--that
I didn't care enough to notice what
was really going on in the world
I was shaping.



I know now that it is a false, fallen world that we paint as "good enough," but under its skin, we all know it is rotten to the core.

And on reflection, almost all of the things I have made do nothing but support the systems that reduce men and women to pawns and playthings...to workers and consumers...to servants and slaves.

All the things I have made are tainted with a patina of evil.

All of them but one.

And that is you.

If this has found its way to you, then I am gone and I have left you a world that is no place for the innocent.

But only innocent eyes can see it for what it could be.

Remember, Anthony...

It's never too late to change the world around you...

A full-page comic book illustration of Captain America. He is shown from the waist up, wearing his iconic blue, white, and red suit with a large white star on the chest and a blue helmet with a white 'A'. He is holding his shield in his left hand, which is raised high. His right hand is extended forward, palm up. The background is a mix of blue and brown tones, suggesting a battlefield or a dramatic setting. The overall style is classic comic book art with bold lines and a rich color palette.

You just have
to fight.

And you have
to win.

THE BEGINNING...



ULTIMATE UNIVERSE

NOVEMBER 2023



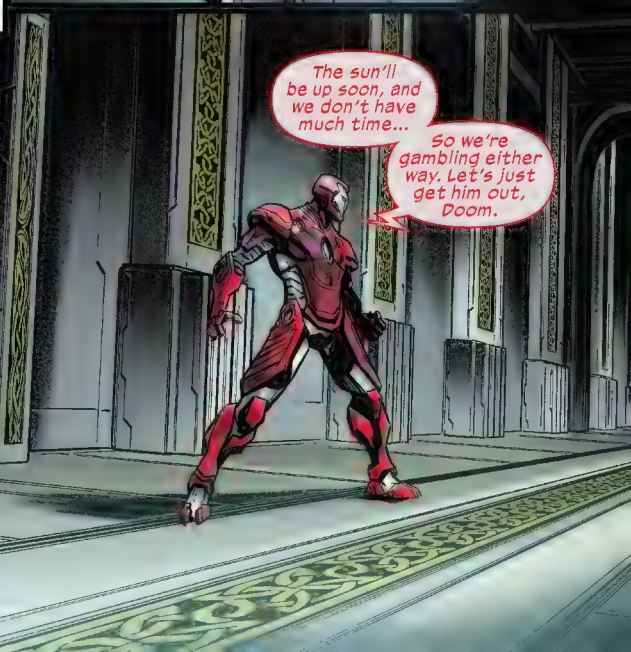
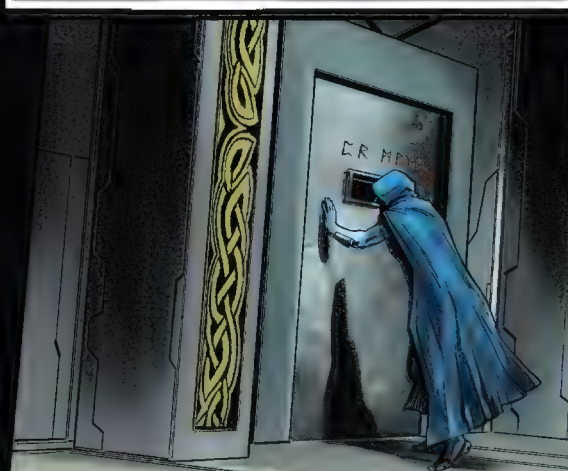
**TWO WEEKS AGO, THE CITY WAS
SEALED, TRAPPING THE EMPEROR OF
EARTH, THE MAKER, INSIDE.**

**NOW, IN HIS ABSENCE, A QUIET WAR
HAS BROKEN OUT ACROSS THE PLANET
TO SHAPE WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO
HIS KINGDOM.**

SOME WANT TO CONTROL THE WORLD.

SOME WANT TO FREE IT.

CR:MPYB





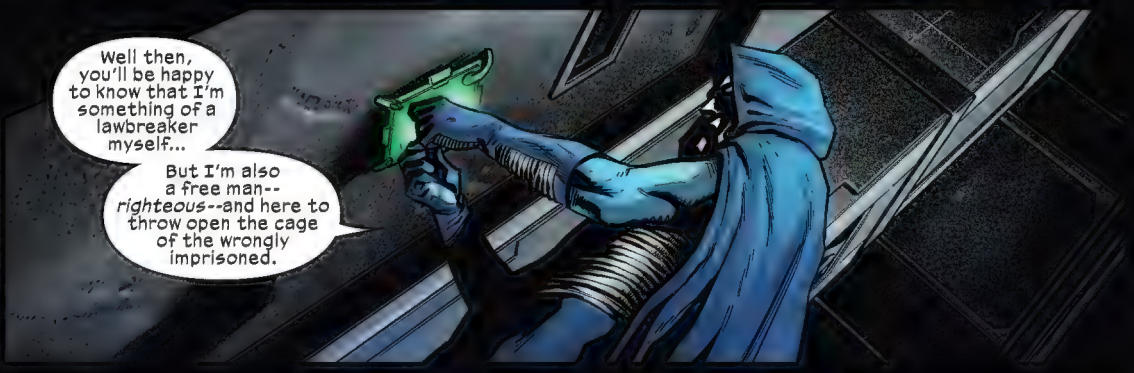
Hello.
Can you hear
me?

Is anyone
in there?



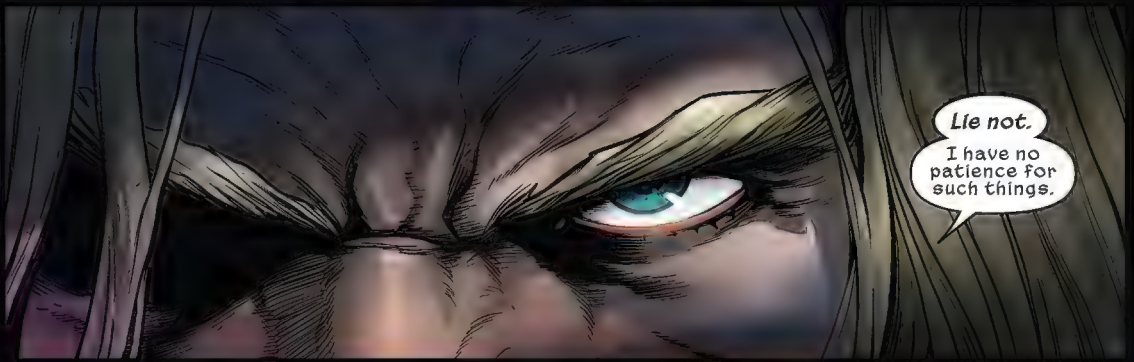
Go away.
I want no
food nor drink,
and I desire neither
company nor
conversation...

For I have
nothing to say
and nothing you should
want to hear, as--in
accordance with the law
and to my great shame--
I have been branded
a traitor.



Well then,
you'll be happy
to know that I'm
something of a
lawbreaker
myself...

But I'm also
a free man--
righteous--and here to
throw open the cage
of the wrongly
imprisoned.



Lie not.

I have no
patience for
such things.



I promise...

It is true
that I am here to
free one *particular*
man...

...but only
if that man is the
*god of thunder and
lightning.*

I am
he... I am
Thor.



We
have him,
Iron Lad.

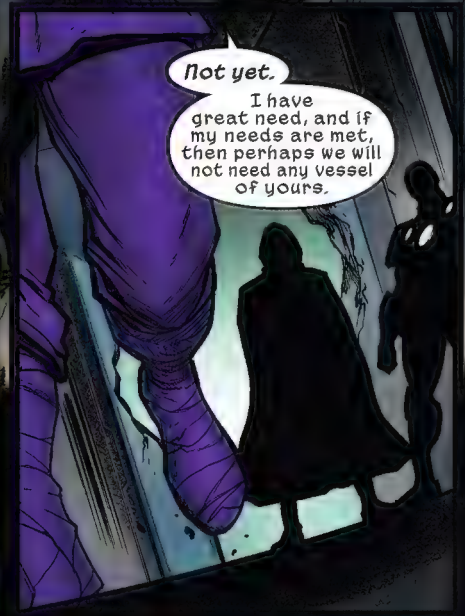
Great!
Come on.
Let's get out
of here.

Our
ship's this
way.



Not yet.

I have
great need, and if
my needs are met,
then perhaps we will
not need any vessel
of yours.

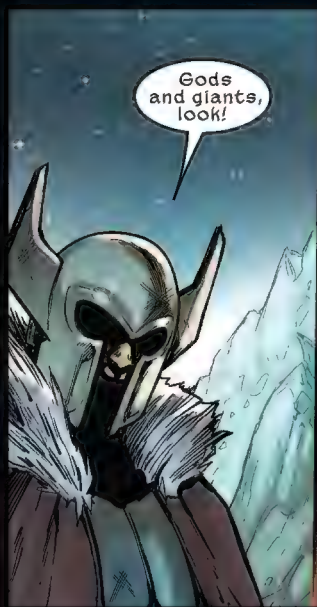


Do you think
he knows the ship
he's talking about
is a bleeding-edge
prototype that can
navigate both real
and imaginary
space?

I do not.
But he does
seem unusually
certain.

I know.
So the question
I have is, what's
better than a billion-
dollar space-
ship?





Ah, Odinson.
Out and
about.

This is not in
accordance with
what was agreed nor
with what was
arranged.

And yet it
seems you are--
once again--craving
both the stick and
the correction
with which it
comes.

Lady Sif. I only want
what is mine.

Then I will be
on my way and--
though it might grieve
us both--no longer
your concern.

How so, son of Asgard?
Are the royal prisons
not my domain? Am I not
warden and, as such, you
not my ward?

Should
you escape,
all blame will
be mine.

I tell you
truly, I care not
for that, so you
will act accordingly
and return to
your cell.

I am
leaving.

And I am
leaving with
what is
mine.

Oh my.
Are we going
to fight?

I do
so love it
when we
fight.







It is a very impressive weapon. Perhaps more impressive than your very impressive ship.

Here's what I want to know: If he can summon it at will, why didn't he do that when he was in his cell?

Given what we know, there's really only one reason I can think of:



"He didn't
want to."

SMASHHHH!

Wait...
wait...

No, I have
waited long
enough.

CRUUNNNEH!

**MURDER
THOOOOW!**

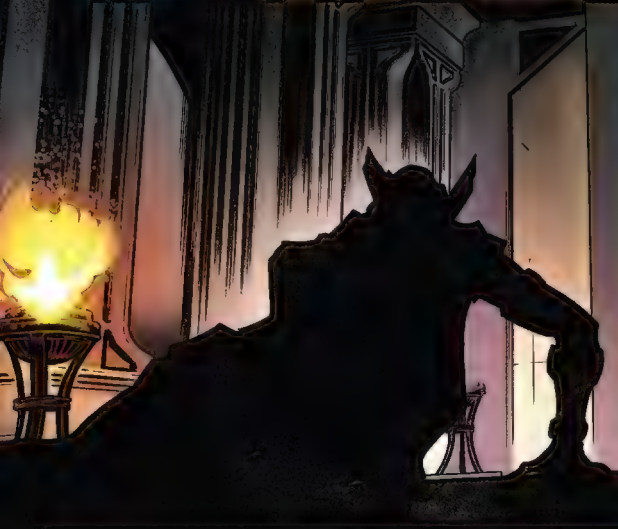
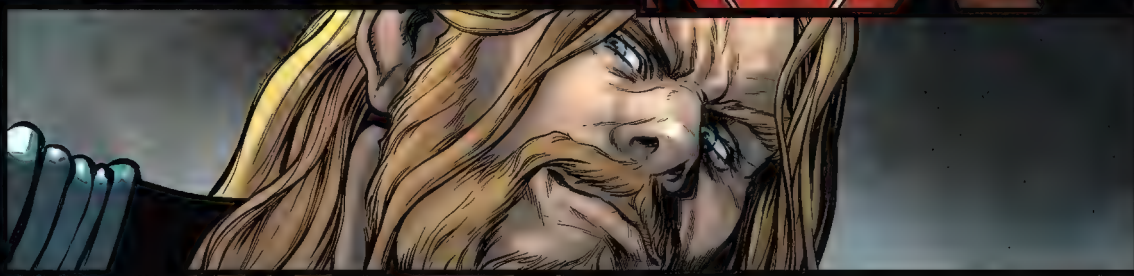


... Now we may leave.



Great. The only problem is that with all the chaos and noise, we're probably going to have to fight our way to the ship...

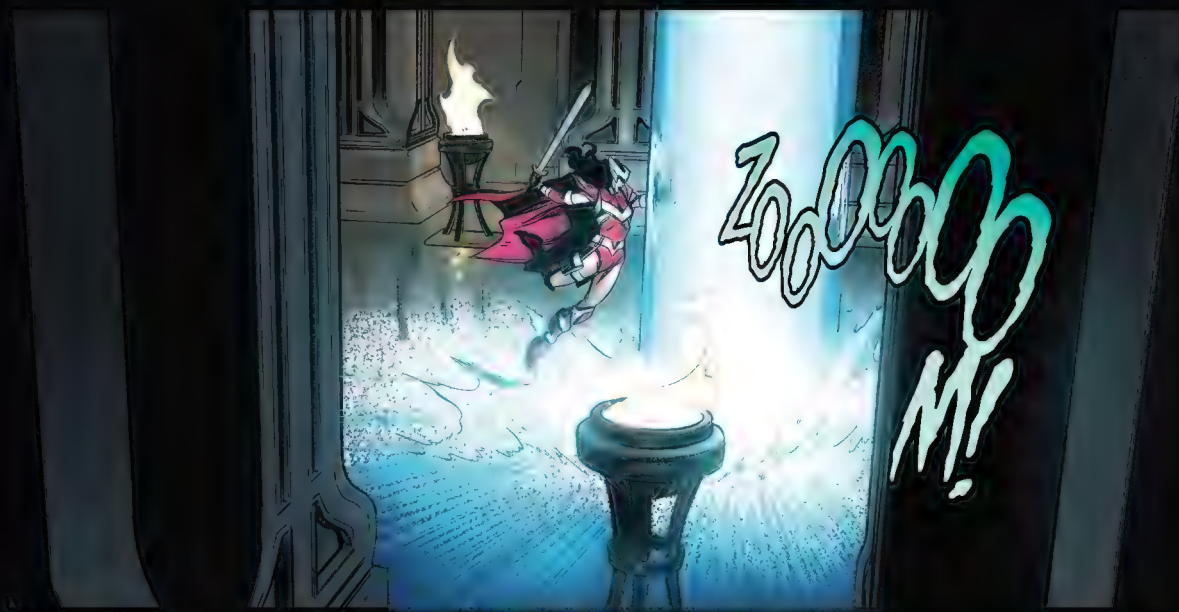
But it's our only way out of here--what else are we gonna do?



Stand close to me.



This might feel odd.





ULTIMATE UNIVERSE

WRITER: **JONATHAN HICKMAN**

ARTIST: **STEFANO CASELLI**

COLOR ARTIST: **DAVID CURIEL**

LETTERER: **VC's JOE CARAMAGNA**

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EDITOR: **WIL MOSS**

EDITOR IN CHIEF: **C.B. CEBULSKI**

New York.
Stark Tower.



In many ways,
he is the same as
you and I...

A hero of an
erased age. But unlike
all of us--because he *is*
from an older, *less* corrupted
time--we were able to rescue
him at his origin and in a
state of innocence.



Unscarred,
unchanged...
**better, I
suppose.**



Stand
back.
He should
be freed. As
I was.

Whoa.
Whoa.
You can't
do it that
way...



Getting him out of there is going to be a...complicated process.

The Maker's files are Byzantine. Because of that, we're working a little blind here-- we have no safety net, so we have to be careful.



I believe that we could do it faster by replacing his pre-existing blood with artificial picotech, but...

...the files mention that his powers are derived from something called a "Super-Soldier Serum," which-- we must conclude--is a blood-based augmentation.

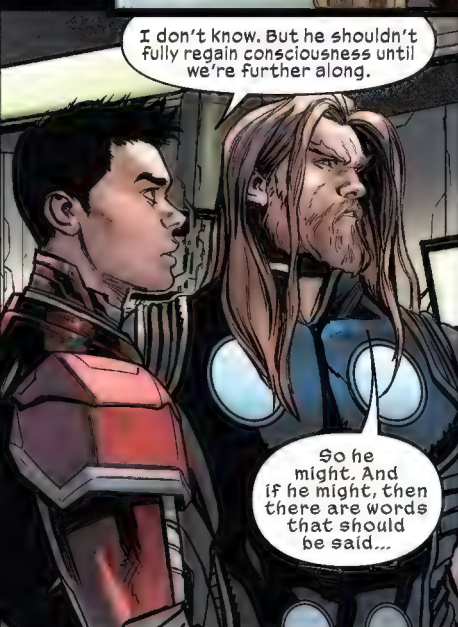
I think we should do it anyway...

But *some of us* have an outsize aversion to risk.

Yeah. That's me. The weirdo who doesn't want to gamble with people's lives.



Can he hear us?



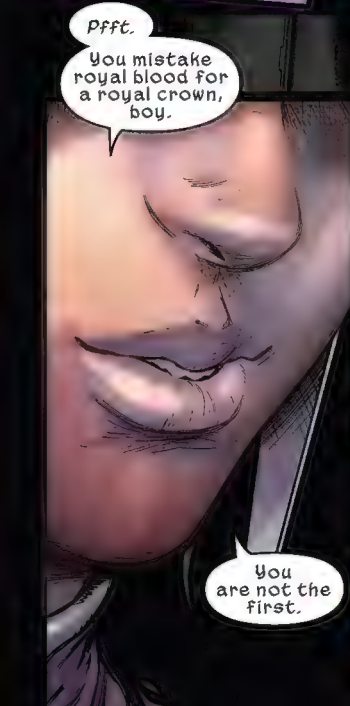
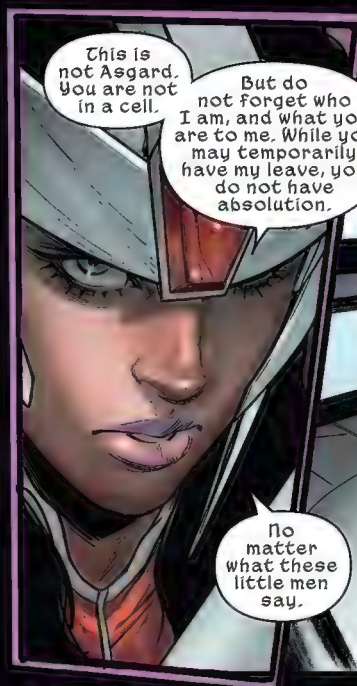
I don't know. But he shouldn't fully regain consciousness until we're further along.

So he might. And if he might, then there are words that should be said...



Hear me, brother, I would free you now--as I would any in chains who deserve them not--were the risks not grave and the cost so high.

But you have my word. Should the time come when such a choice must be made, you will be freed. Better to die as such than helpless and hopeless, trapped in a frozen hell.





The ruler of
this Earth--our
imperator--is a
man called the
Maker.

And while he is trapped inside his "future city," we are presented with an opportunity. We can change this world back into the world it was supposed to be.



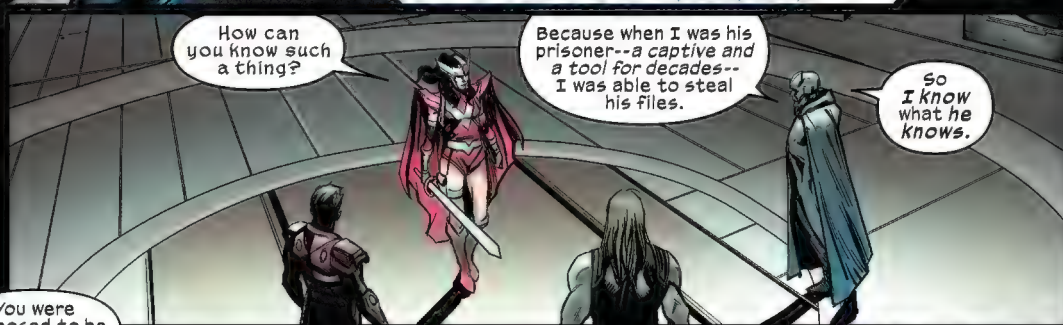
"You have to understand--and this is the heart of the matter--he is from a different universe, and he arrived here with a very specific mission:

"To systematically
erase this world's
heroes from
existence.



"He was able to do this by denying them the circumstances and events that would have transformed them into what they were supposed to be.

"And he was able to do that because he arrived in our universe with the knowledge of the history of our Earth's heroes."



How can you know such a thing?

Because when I was his prisoner--a captive and a tool for decades--I was able to steal his files.

So
I know
what he
knows.



You were supposed to be King of Asgard, Thor.

Instead he helped your brother, Loki, kill your father and steal your birthright.

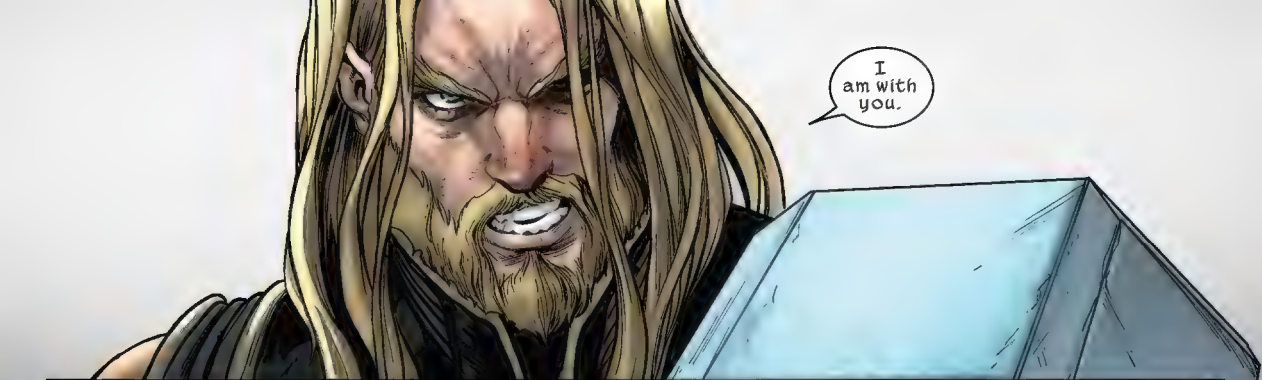
He ruined
your future, and
not just yours but
many, many more
people like you.
Like us.



We want to set things right.

Will you help us?

It is no small thing to realize that this pain I have nursed for years was not a sickness or a flaw but instead a righteous anger.

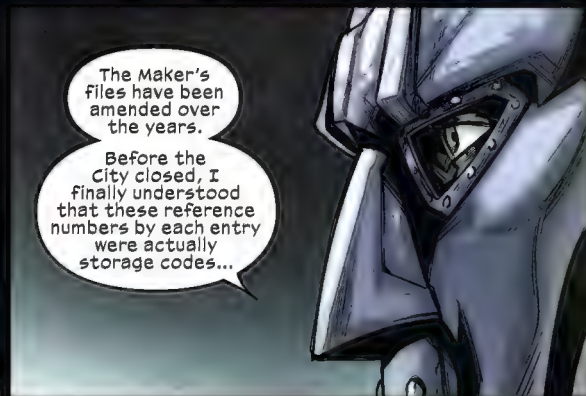


I am with you.



And you?

...
I'll stick around for the ride.



The Maker's files have been amended over the years.

Before the City closed, I finally understood that these reference numbers by each entry were actually storage codes...



...to *this*: a repository where he keeps tokens, trinkets and, I suppose, catalysts or keys to each hero he has wronged.



It's located here, in the capital city of Latveria.

I know nothing of Earthly fortresses, but I know a well-built citadel when I see one.

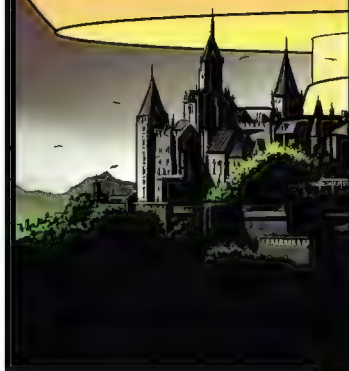
They will not simply let you walk in there and take it.

Well, that's true.

If only we had some way to get there...

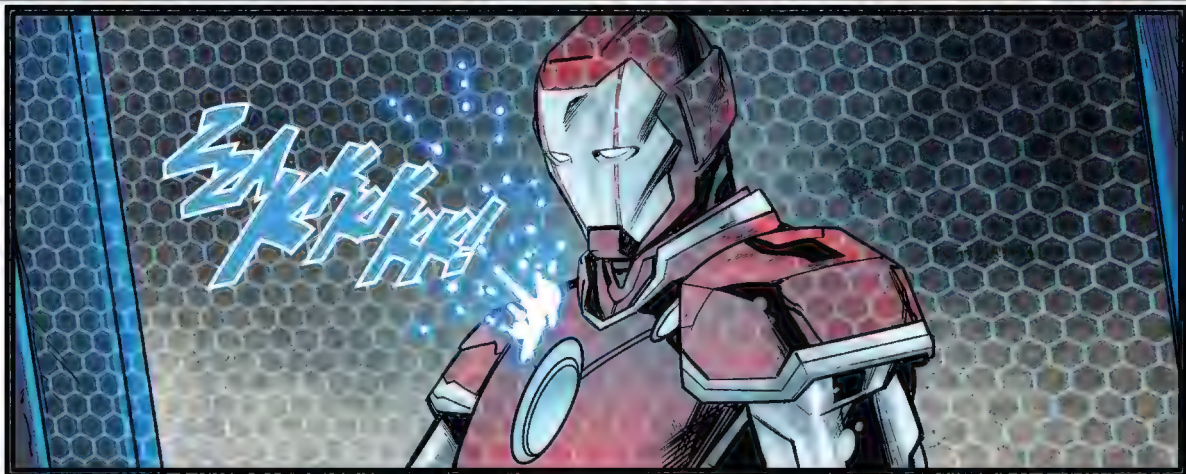
Magically, and in the blink of an eye.

Latveria.

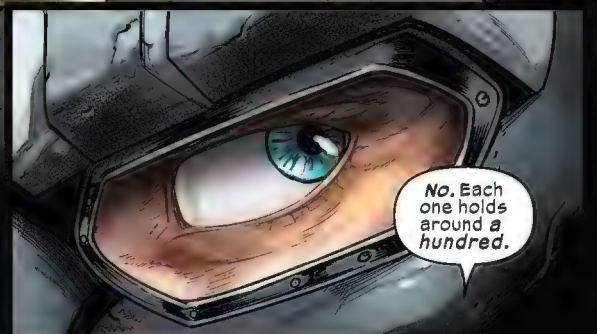


There!

There
it is.









What could this world have been?



There's so many. We can't leave them...or just pick and choose...

Maybe we can gather them together. Jump out with them all.

Even with Mjolnir, there are limits to the area he can move.

Can you do it?



It's an evil thing, the stealing of dreams.

The work of demons and devils and souls that are damned. To make a world where men are chained to a future that is not their own--
obscenity.

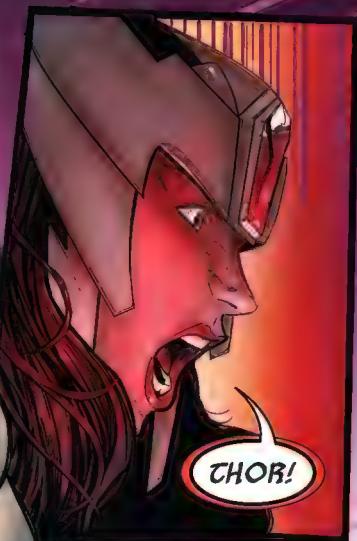
Can I do it?



I am a god. And not bound by the limits of men.



Of course I can--
Hurrkk!



THOR!

Some men--
it seems--are a
bit better than
others. Non?

*Vous êtes
des intrus et des
voleurs...*

SLICE



There are
consequences
for crime in the
capital city.



And
today?



Captain
Britain
is your
judge.

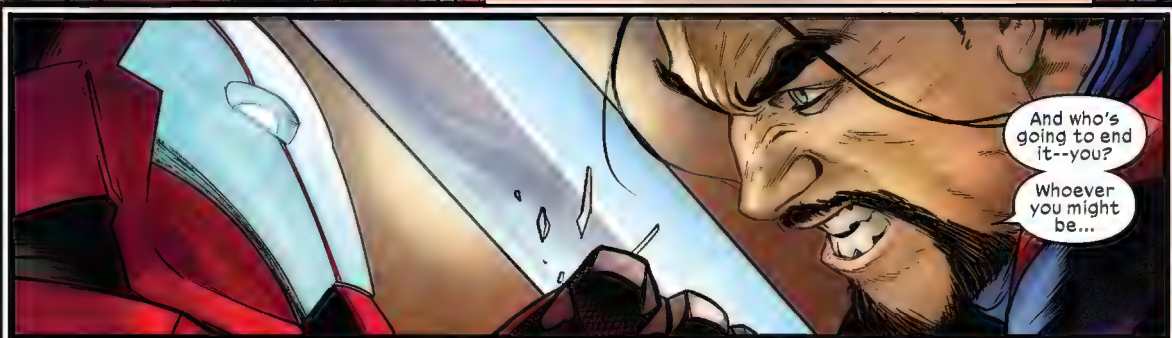
SMASH



I know who you are...and what you secret rulers of the world have done...



It's going to end.



And who's going to end it--you?

Whoever you might be...

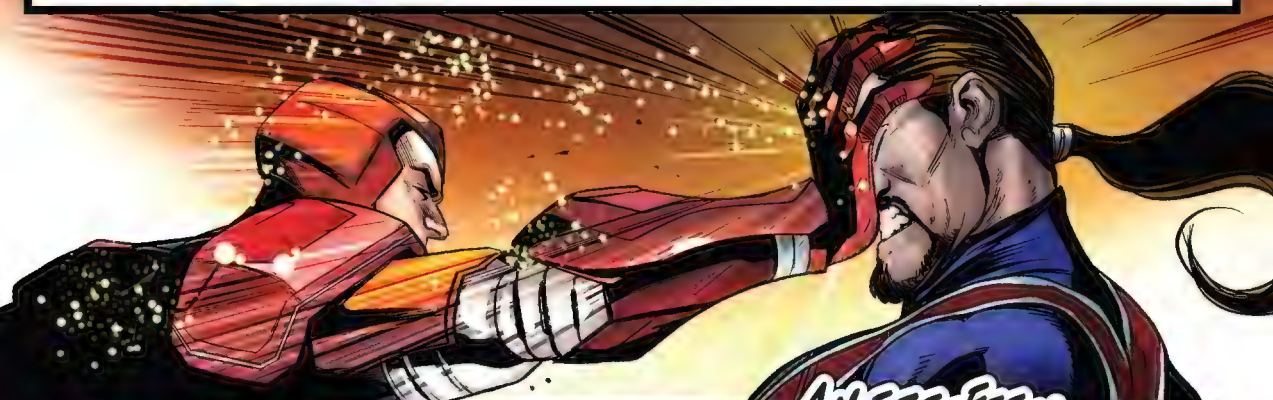


SKKRUNK!



Ah. I know that face.

Un visage de traître. Issu d'une famille de traîtres.



Stark Tower.

I'm activating the emergency medical protocols.

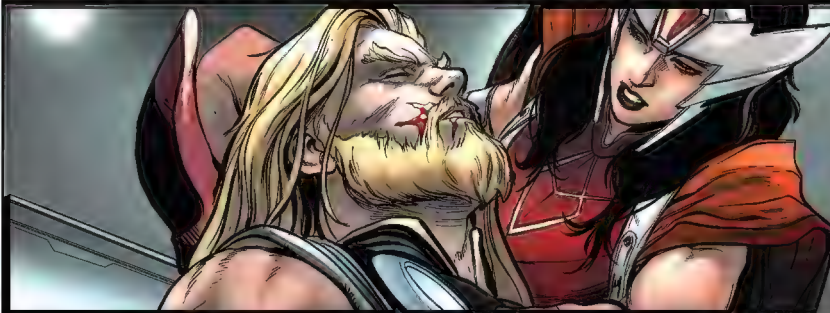
But I'm... I've...

I've never used this before.



He is... my prisoner.

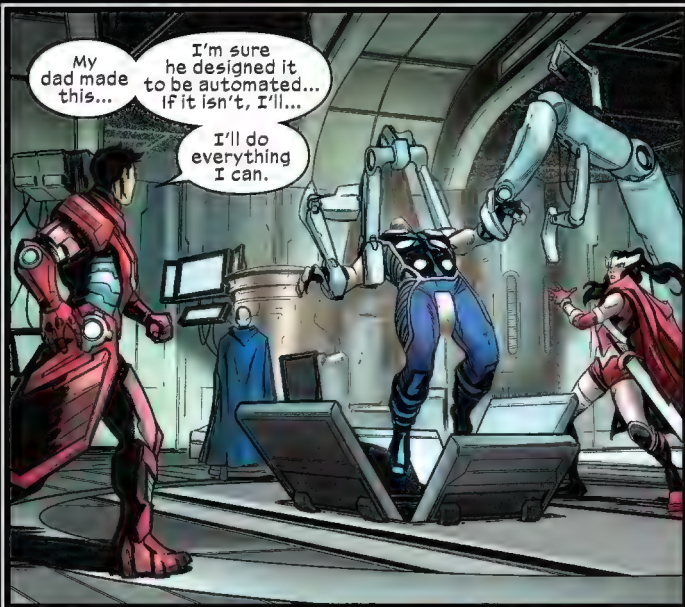
He cannot die on my watch.



My dad made this...

I'm sure he designed it to be automated... If it isn't, I'll...

I'll do everything I can.



It appears that much of the one repository we escaped with is a stasis/cryogenic device meant to preserve whatever it holds...

Inside, there are many, many catalysts. We have options... and variables abound.





Latveria.

Look
at what he
has done
to me!!!



I am blinded!
Disfigured!

Je mangerai
son cœur et je
deviendrai fort
grâce au
sang.



Calm yourself.
You sound
hysterical.

What
happened?
Exactly?



Stark and his companions broke into
the castle and escaped with the
Maker's lure.

Your injury
seems to have affected
not just your sight but
your understanding of what
you see. Howard Stark was
inside the City when
it closed.

No! Not
the father.
The son.

Et je
n'oublierai pas
comment tu m'as
parlé ce jour, Vipère.



The son?
Interesting.

We regret
the loss of your
eye, Captain, but we
have all been wondering
exactly how to deal
with the vacuum of power
on that continent and to
claim it for ourselves...

I now
see a path
forward. He
does not
know it...

...but the boy
has given us
North America.



"All we have
to do is
take it."

BREEP!

Something's
wrong.

Targeting
alert from near-
Earth orbit? That
doesn't make
any sense...
unless...

Oh no.

And
how has he
done that,
Hulk?

By committing the
acts of a tyrant...
or worse...

"...those of
a terrorist.

Options are
limited with the
Asgardian felled.
Perhaps only
one.

Yeah.
I know...

"And what do
acts of terror
yield?"



"Opportunity."



And how
will we sell
it?

HI NO KUNI

CHILDREN OF ETERNITY

EURASIAN REPUBLIC

ER AND LOWER

We do
what we
do.

We tell lies
so large that it's
inconceivable that
they are fabricated
or false.

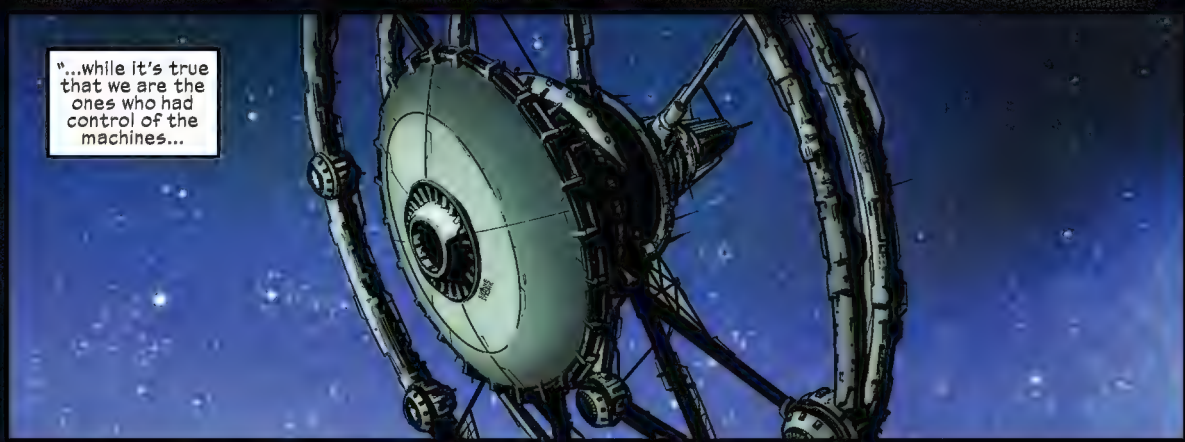
And we
cover that with
just enough truth
to sell it. We put
his name on it:
Stark.



And you think
people will believe
it when we blame
the boy?



Of course
they will.
After all...



"...while it's true
that we are the
ones who had
control of the
machines...



"...it was his
family who
built them."

THE WORLD



THE WORLD

AS REMADE BY THE MAKER'S COUNCIL

 THE NORTH AMERICAN UNION — REDISTRIBUTED
 REGIONAL SUBSIDIARIES — REDISTRIBUTED

 THE SOCIETY OF SOUTH AMERICA
 REGIONAL CLUBS
 FRACTIONAL CULTURES

 THE EUROPEAN COALITION
 REGIONAL GOVERNORS
 FIEFDOMS

 THE CITY
 LATVERIAN TERRITORIES

 THE UPPER AND LOWER KINGDOMS
 REGIONAL DYNASTIES
 LOCAL TEMPLES

 THE EURASIAN REPUBLIC
 REGIONAL DIRECTORS
 LOCAL SCHOOLS

 THE CHILDREN OF ETERNAL LIGHT
 THE SHADOWS OF THE IMMORTAL HAND

 HI NO KUNI ("LAND OF THE SUN")
 DAIMYOS

 UNDISCOVERED TERRITORY

1963-2023



EPILOGUE

One week later.

Against a backdrop of global concern and international aid, it is with gratitude and great sorrow that we do our best to reflect on the events of last week.

And while all of us here, and millions around the world, still wait for answers about what happened that day...

...for now, all we have are questions.

BENJAMIN NICHOLSON • ROLO NIDAL •

Thousands remain missing.

ROLO NIDAL • LINH NGUYEN • JAME

And while almost no physical evidence remains, local and international agencies--using GPS, digital I.D.s and other forensic data--

--have been able to create a database of unfortunate souls who may have been in the blast radius of the terror attack.

H NGUYEN • JAMES O'CONNER • WIL

Below me, those potential victims' names are scrolling on the screen.

IER • WILLIAM O'SHEA • ROLF OLSO

People who--
according to both
the data and the
experts who
analyzed it--

--were believed to
have been near the
corporate headquarters
of Stane/Stark
when the event
occurred...

• ROLLF OLSON • EMILY OSBORN • NO



Authorities need all
the help they can get, so
anyone who can confirm or
deny any of these names,
please contact them
immediately.

OSBORN • NORMAN OSBORN • BROOK

And while
domestically these
are troubling, strange
times, it seems that
these events are not
contained by our
borders.

In Hi No Kuni,
a car explosively
collided with a
bicycle in the
streets.



And while the driver
remains in serious
condition, the 15-year-old
girl who was hit by the car
escaped without a
scratch on her.

BROOKS PACE • WILLAM PACHECO • I



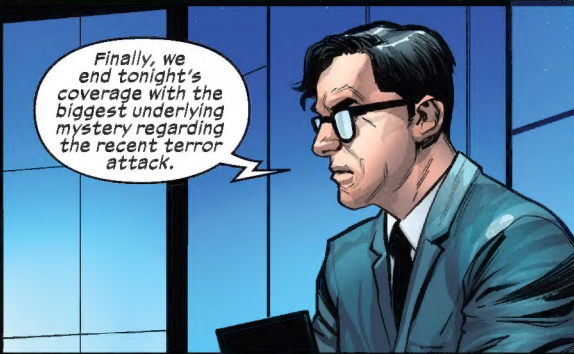
Elsewhere, in several
of the dynastic
strongholds of the
Upper and Lower
Kingdoms--

--there are
reports of an
outbreak of regional
infighting and,
perhaps, open
insurgence.

M PACHECO • DOUGLAS PACK • MAR

Due to the volatile nature of the conflict and an accompanying media blackout, there has been very little available coverage of the events.

All that we have, we are sharing with you now, and we will keep you updated as we learn more.



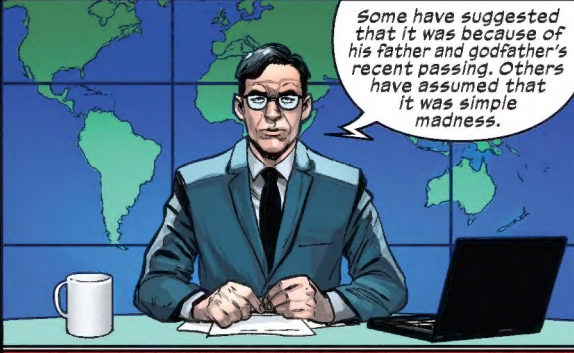
Finally, we end tonight's coverage with the biggest underlying mystery regarding the recent terror attack.

ACK • MARIA PALACIOS • MAY PARKER



Why would a teenage boy commit this terrible act?

OS • MAY PARKER • MARICIO PAZ • S



Some have suggested that it was because of his father and godfather's recent passing. Others have assumed that it was simple madness.

MARICIO PAZ • STACI PERALTA • ALEX



We will continue to try to find answers to these questions--

--but as Tony Stark is believed to have been in the blast, it is safe to assume that he too has perished.

STACI PERALTA • ALEXANDER PRYOR



And it's very possible we may never know why he did it.



**ULTIMATE
SPIDER-MAN #1**

BY **JONATHAN HICKMAN
& MARCO CHECCHETTO**

JANUARY 2024



**ULTIMATE
BLACK PANTHER #1**

BY **BRYAN HILL &
STEFANO CASELLI**

FEBRUARY 2024



**ULTIMATE
X-MEN #1**

BY
PEACH MOMOKO

MARCH 2024

AND KEEP READING FOR AN EXCLUSIVE TWO-PAGE ORIGINAL STORY
BY **PEACH MOMOKO** TO SET THE STAGE FOR **ULTIMATE X-MEN #1...**